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Week ending August 10 1957 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

JOHN BULL

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The nightmare story of the R 101 disaster

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ON SALE TUESDAY AUG. 13—1/6

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JOHN BULL

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CHANCERY 3344 AUGUST 10, 1957 VOLUME 102 NUMBER 2667

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

James Leasor—hard work has brought him success

In 1929 James Leasor, aged five, saw the giant airship R 101 on a trial flight. It symbolized for him the thrilling stories told by his father, a schoolteacher who during the first World War served as a petty officer in a Royal Navy airship.

Twenty-eight years later, still retaining his childhood interest in airships, James Leasor has written the dramatic story of the R 101 and its tragic first passenger flight. *The Millionth Chance* begins on page 9.

Leasor began investigating the R 101 disaster in March, 1956, and finished the book in February this year. "The research took three-quarters of the time," he says. It included interviews with 150 people and painstaking detective work to trace survivors of the airship.

At thirty-three, Leasor is one of the most successful—and hard-working—young journalists in Britain. Two years ago he left Fleet Street to work for himself, and *The Millionth Chance* is the second book of his published this year. He was also co-author of *The One That Got Away*, the story of a German fighter pilot's escapes from British prison camps, which we serialized at the end of 1956. In addition he is joint author of a television series which has just been sold in the United States.

With his wife Joan and their two young sons Leasor lives at Elstree in Hertfordshire. There, in his odd moments away from writing, he tinkers with engines of sports cars or digs the garden.

Now he is planning his next book ("I have already sold the idea to a film company") and preparing for a visit to the Continent to gather material. There is also a novel waiting to be finished—"but I don't seem able to find the time to get on with it."

Eric Simms, who writes about seagulls on page 20, has studied the world's birds in Europe, Canada and America, as well as in Britain. At thirty-six he is a council member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and has turned his hobby into a full-time job with the B.B.C., for whom he directs natural history recording work.

When he was only two, Simms proudly took home a baby blue-tit. "My mother was very cross," he says. "But I convinced her that the parent birds were away looking for food, and that I could soon slip the bird back into the nest before they returned." In the war years, as a second pilot and bomb aimer, he watched birds at their own level from the canopy of a Lancaster aircraft while flying on bombing trips to Germany.

Living in London with his wife Thelma—"an appreciative bird-watcher"—he finds plenty of opportunity for bird study. "Surprisingly enough," he says, "London is one of the best places in the world to watch birds. Within a radius of twenty miles of St. Paul's I have seen more different species than in almost any other area of similar size in Britain."

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Free Speech

- **When authority favours the drinker**
- **Are British butchers out of date?**
- **How to swim with a petrol can**

THE school at which I teach and the public house in which I live are both old buildings scheduled for alteration. But I'll bet that the pub will be finished first.

If the authorities require that the drinking public shall be protected from infection by special sinks and sterilizers it has to be done quickly. But the children can go on having dinner in an overcrowded classroom which retains pieces of slippery beetroot and a smell of cabbage for the rest of the afternoon.

And the fact that 170 children share three washbasins is not, apparently, as important as the fact that women using the public house washroom have to go outside to do so.

If the police and licensing authorities can threaten inns and hotels with closure on the grounds of insanitary conditions I suggest that they also inspect some of our schools. At present it seems that the drinkers are considered more important than children.—TEACHER, Lancashire.

Cross Over Wires?

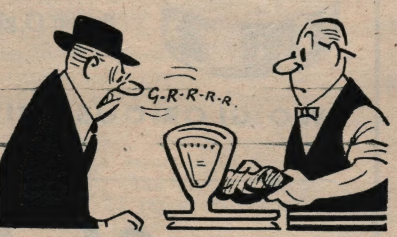
The Postmaster-General has paid me a shilling a year for nine years because my neighbour's wires cross a corner of my garden. In view of increased telephone costs and the Rent Act am I not entitled to tell him that my charge for wayleave has been increased, too?—J. W. ANDERSON, Welwyn, Herts.

"A shilling is the nominal fee agreed in all but a few exceptional cases," says the G.P.O. "But there is nothing to stop Mr. Anderson negotiating for more if he feels that the circumstances have altered sufficiently."

No Bones About It

On the Continent and in America, no butcher would dream of selling meat with bones in it. Yet here we pay high prices for a joint which is often one-third bone.

Why are our butchers so old-fashioned? I realize that boneless meat would be even dearer than at present, but at least it would all be edible. We shouldn't be paying 3s. 6d. a pound for the dog's dinner. —MRS. ELIZABETH RING, Rowney Bury, Harlow, Essex.



One Soho butcher sells shoulder of lamb at 4s. a pound, boned, compared with 3s. 6d. unboned. "It takes years of specialized training to work in the best Continental fashion," says another French expert. "We are more like Harley Street surgeons than butchers."

Cutting Out Salt

I read the article about salt with great interest ("Your Life In A Crystal," JOHN BULL, June 22), but was surprised by the statement that "anyone who cuts it completely out of his diet will fall ill and eventually die." I suffer from heart disease and am compelled by doctor's orders to live on an entirely salt-free diet.—N. A., Eastbourne.

"Sodium is the essential constituent of common salt," says a doctor, "and cutting it to a minimum helps to prevent the dropsy to which sufferers from heart and kidney diseases are prone. But there is enough sodium already present in many foods to keep up an ample supply to body tissues even when the patient thinks his diet is completely salt free."

Whitehall Worrier

Why do most of our comedians, journalists and novelists always portray civil servants as thin, pale, bespectacled men wearing black pin-striped trousers and black homburg hats? I have worked in the Ministry of Labour for ten years and have still to meet one of these types. I find that we compare favourably in physique with our fellow men and our clothes seem very ordinary compared with some of the creations worn today.

Are we really such funny creatures, or are these jokes a hangover from the last century?—J. D., Essex.

Barbed Deterrent

I note with disgust that a dangerous war weapon is still extensively used in Britain. In these days of prisons without bars the use of barbed wire to protect private houses and land should be outlawed.

An adult can break through it with little difficulty and it is only innocent young children who become victims of this barbarous type of fencing.—W. DUNCAN, Glasgow.

Changing Cherubs

Nobody should laugh at B. S., of Kent, for his efforts to keep up with the Jones's and make sure that his children are not spoiled by the uncouth manners so easily picked up at council schools ("Free Speech," July 20).

As a rent collector I have been shocked at the change which comes over sweet little girls of five when they first start school. I am assured that this phase rarely lasts, but it is very unpleasant while it does.

Children seem to acquire only the bad traits of their playmates—and on the whole I would try to send them to a school where they had a chance to preserve the niceness and politeness inherited from their parents. — W. R., Wallington, Surrey.

Carrying The Can

The cartoon in which the cabin cruiser owner has swum ashore with a can for petrol (JOHN BULL, July 13) has started an argument. When the can is full will he be unable to swim back—or will the petrol give the can buoyancy? — E. G. BARNES, Pellbrook Road, Lewes, Sussex.

"There is no doubt that a two-gallon can filled with petrol will float," says Shell-Mex and B.P., Ltd., "because one of our technicians took a can home and tried the experiment in his bath. The reason is that the specific gravity of petrol is only .8 compared with 1.0 for water."

Symbol In Song

It is quite true that the idea for an International Eisteddfod came from me (JOHN BULL, June 29), but credit should also go to a milkboy I heard singing on his round soon after D-day in 1944.

Less than two hours' flying away, the bombs were dropping and the guns firing. But the singing of that boy—Lawrence Roberts of Coed Poeth—was for me a symbol of the contribution that music could make to peace.

When the festival was established my work with the British Council took me away from Wales. And I am glad to see now that the idea for music festivals of this kind has spread to many countries abroad. — HAROLD TUDOR, Birmingham.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

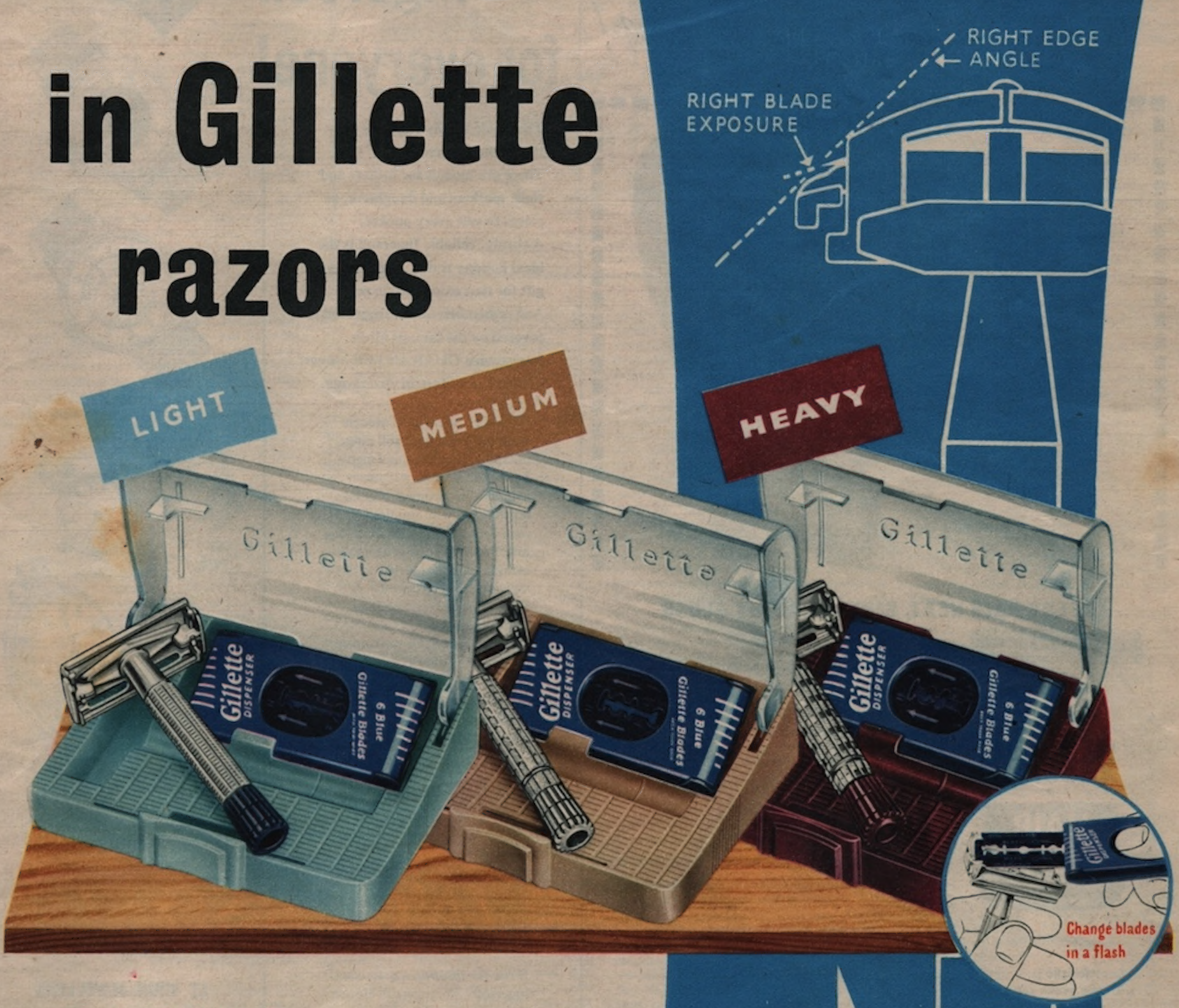
THE COVER

BACK comes another cardboard folder full of snap judgments and shattered illusions. And you don't need to be telepathic to read those thoughts: "It's so good of everyone but me. . . ." But with girls as pretty as these that expensive camera must have lied hard to let a 1927 box take the best picture. The expert who kept them waiting while he fiddled with all those gadgets got sand in his lens and shudder in the shutter. Such photographic pitfalls never worry cover artist, Batchelor, though. If the pier threatens to spoil his composition he leaves it out.

JOHN BULL
The nightmare story of the R 101 disaster
24
DEVELOPING PRINTING

Big change in Gillette razors

Angle, and exposure differ with each weight of razor


RIGHT EDGE ANGLE
RIGHT BLADE EXPOSURE
LIGHT
MEDIUM
HEAVY
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Gillette DISPENSER
6 Blue Gillette Blades
Change blades in a flash

NOW choose a razor to match your skin & beard!

There is a big change in the new Gillette razors. Instead of one standard razor for the average man, there is now a choice of three, and one of these is 'tailor-made' expressly for your type of skin and beard.

Light is for sensitive skins or men who prefer a lighter razor.
Medium is for average skin and beard.
Heavy for tough beards and men who prefer the feel of a heavier razor.

7/6
EACH

New — for that healthy 'just-combed' look all day long!

KEEPS HAIR NEAT, GIVES HEALTHY GLOSS

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HAIR CREAM
PREPARED FROM VITAMIN-ISED OILS
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Look for the jar
with the green cap

KEEP that healthy "just-combed" look right through the day! New Vaseline Brand Hair Cream is prepared from vitamin-ised oils, specially emulsified so that it—

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- Gives a rich, healthy gloss
- Benefits both scalp and hair

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'Junior' size 1/10½

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A sturdy, reliable Ingersoll is the ideal holiday watch, and the perfect gift for that examination prize.

And remember—every Ingersoll is covered by the famous all-in free-service GUARANTEE—*even against accidental breakage.*

Here are some typical models from the latest Ingersoll range of ladies' 7-jewelled and men's 5-jewelled models. All are available in chromed or golden finish cases, with stainless steel backs, many with matching bracelets. The men's Ingersolls include water-protected 'Sealions', sweep centre seconds models and plain or Radiolite dials.

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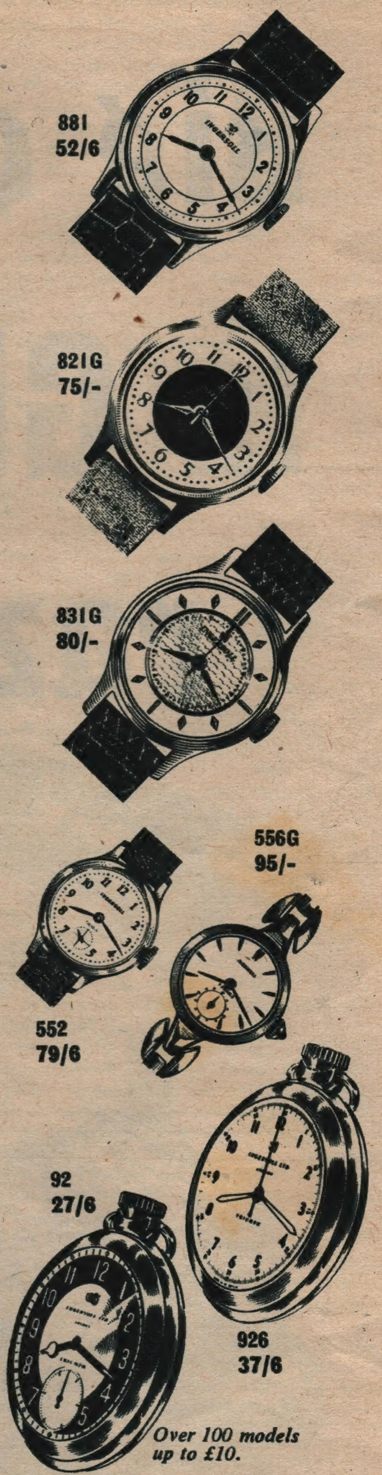

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EYE OF THE MASTER

These people loved him for his dignity and skill. Yet now he was afraid to go among them

by *CLEDWYN HUGHES*

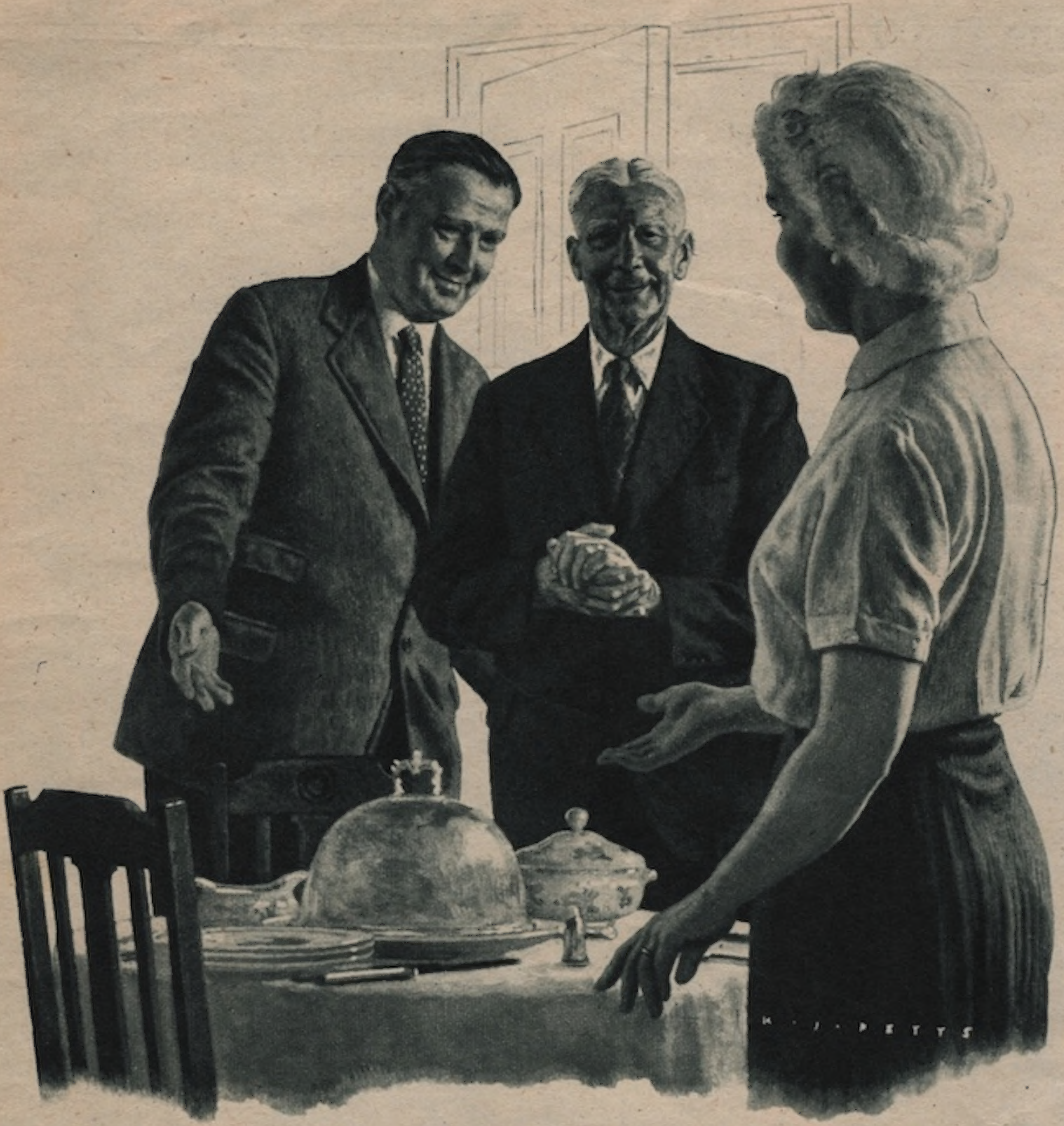
ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

SOME men are born with the magic of one particular skill or art combined in their co-ordination of mind and hand and eye. So it was with Edward Thomas; by upbringing and everyday life a simple countryman earning his living as a tractor-ploughman.

He was a good ploughman; as good as any in those parishes where Wales meets England by the Shropshire Plain. But the craft of good ploughing can be learned by any man; Edward had another great talent.

That was his ability at the game of darts. No man, in a thousand games in a hundred parishes, had ever come within likely distance of beating Edward at individual scoring. Any team which contained Edward Thomas won because of his

Old Edward was a great darts player . . . but tonight a curious thing was happening. Everybody watched as he made to throw again



One February morning, a few days after the great event of his life, old Edward was fetched back to the farm by Mr. Jehu. There, Mrs. Jehu had prepared a special dinner for them

presence. He could place darts anywhere on a board just by willing them to their destination. He could knock a standing dart out with a second throw; he could make the most symmetrical rose of feathers about the bull; he could flight a dart almost to the ceiling and make it land exactly at any double number. And once, quite long ago, he had skewered a dried pea, held on the knuckles of Pryce Morgan, the landlord of The Golden Eagle in the village.

Now, at seventy, Edward Thomas drove the tractor each day at ploughing or some other farm work. He lived-in at Mile End Farm; that black and white house, surrounded by its buildings of grey stone, had been his home for thirty years.

Mr. and Mrs. Jehu, the farmer and his wife, had a deep affection for their old ploughman, who had turned from horses to tractors late in life. They knew about Edward's skill at darts, but it was because of his gentle and loyal nature that they loved him.

The old man was always kind and always faithful. Mr. and Mrs. Jehu, in return, gave the old man that certain feeling that he was always wanted; that Mile End Farm was as much his home as theirs.

One evening in February, in the parlour of The Golden Eagle, old Edward was giving a demonstration of his skill at darts.

Almost every evening of the past winter he had been playing. His team, The Golden Eagle Venturers, had had a successful season. Because of the presence of old Edward, their handicap had been rated more severe this season than ever by the committee of the district darts league. But they had won the cup and now, when the games were all over for the winter, old Edward was giving his glorious and lovely exhibition of scoring and throwing.

The room was crowded with local people; farmers and workers, tradesmen and country craftsmen. The dartboard was at the south end of the room, held in the gleaming disc of a white-enamelled old motor-car tyre. And above the dartboard, just under the black beams of the ancient ceiling, was a stuffed golden eagle, haughty in a glass cage. This had been in the possession of the inn for a hundred years and was said to be the last bird of its kind caught in the distant mountains of Wales to the west.

There was always a cheer for Edward when he gave his demonstrations. He was an old man, and everyone knew and understood that perhaps some day his skill would get less, his hands become shaky, his eyes unable to tell a number in the haze of cigarette and tobacco smoke.

Old Edward had gone around the board and was now going to work on the treble twenty. Before he did so, Pryce Morgan, the great happy landlord who controlled the destiny of The Golden Eagle, put up his hand.

"Now, friends, let us all be quiet while Edward shows us his skill once again."

There was a round of hand-clapping as old Edward stood, darts in hand. His white hair, bleached by the sun and the winds of the open-air years, shone under the electric light. He always thrust his head forward a little while throwing, and then recoiled.

He was wearing, as usual when not at work, a suit of striped grey cloth. Edward looked more like a preacher of the old school than a great darts player. But he believed, as he said, in bringing decency and respect to the game. Not for him a tartan shirt and jeans; not for him a jogging rhythm from a juke-box as he threw.

But now, on this cold and frosty February night of moon outside and ringing earth, a curious thing happened. Old Edward threw, as usual, with his head forward and his body in intense concentration. But the dart did not touch the board; it cracked against the plate-glass of the case which held the stuffed golden eagle high above the white holding-tyre of the dartboard.

There was a moment of silence in the smoke-filled room. Pryce Morgan, the landlord, picked up the lost dart in his wide white hand. He looked at it for a moment, balancing it across his fingers as if thinking it wrong or evil or gone out of true. Then he tilted it and looked at the point; after that he stared at the solitary golden eagle in its airless case.

"A bit of a slip, Edward?" he said.

Pryce Morgan seemed to be afraid to turn and look at the old master of the game of darts. Others in the room were looking at their hands, sometimes taking side glances at the old ploughman who was standing alone with the two remaining darts held between the brown thin fingers of his right hand. His left hand was smoothing the dark grey cloth of his jacket and feeling the buttons on their true safe anchorage of thread. He seemed to want reassurance, and his old blue eyes were blinking under the white tufts of his eyebrows.

Pryce Morgan turned quietly and came and put out a hand around the neck of the old ploughman and handed back the dart.

"A bit of a slip, eh, Edward?" he said again.

The old ploughman looked at the dart and then put it back in his hand with the other two. He shuffled the three, as if to lose the evil one among the untried darts. He lifted his right arm, and Pryce Morgan moved away and the people watched as the old ploughman made to throw once more.

He landed the first two darts as planned, but the third fell wide at one side. And as the little thing of wood and metal and feather fell on to the shiny linoleum of the bar-parlour floor, the old ploughman said in a very low voice: "My left eye is very dim. I think I'll have a pause."

People began to murmur sympathetically. Some moved out of the room to the frosty night outside, thinking of all the wonders they had seen Edward do in their lifetime at the game of darts. No man could be a master of a thing until the very threshold of his own private eternity; body and mind must fail a little. So they talked.

Meanwhile Pryce Morgan had held out the little leather case in which Edward kept his darts. And the landlord of The Golden Eagle said in that gentle fashion which is the way with great huge men: "I'll run you back to Mile End in the car, and the Missus can call time."

"No," answered Edward. "Oh no, I'll be all right. It's a lovely night and I like to hear the echoes as I walk between the hazel hedges at a cold time like this."

Pryce Morgan paused. He understood the pleasures of a countryman; and how important such things are when the world is breaking. And so all he said was: "I'll give Mr. Jehu a ring on the phone to expect you within the half hour."

Edward, the old ploughman who had known the stars and frosts and moons of all the years, and who this night had failed his skill at darts, only said in answer: "Even if the night was greatly dark, I could *hear* my way back home." Pryce Morgan helped the old ploughman on with his coat. Then the landlord opened the front door of The Golden Eagle for the old man to go out directly on to the road which led

Continued on page 28

Beginning the story of the R 101—a disaster that stunned the world

THE MILLIONTH CHANCE

by JAMES LEASOR

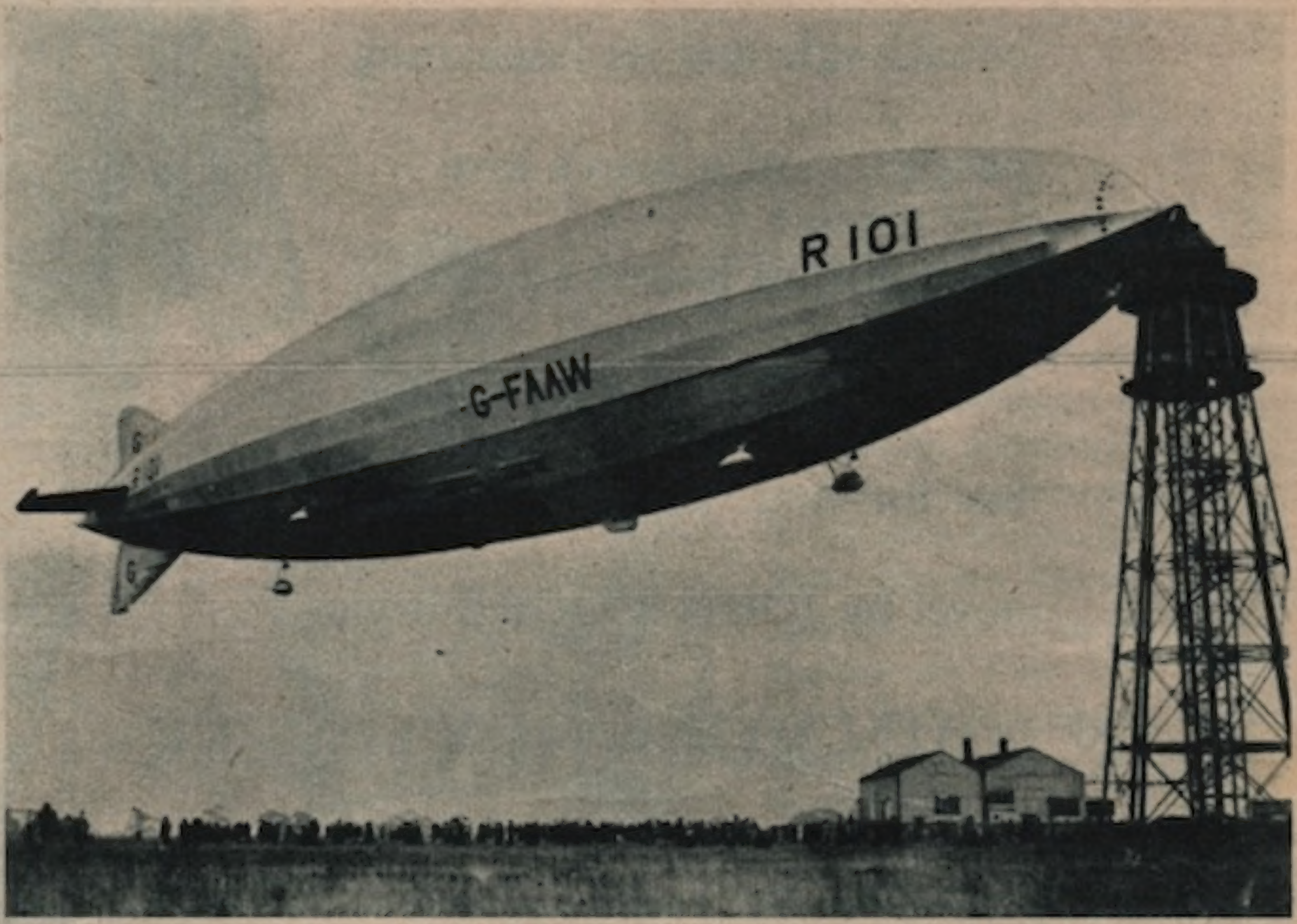
Buffeted by wind and with rain streaming from her, His Majesty's Airship R (for rigid) 101 crossed the northern coast of France shortly before midnight on Saturday, October 4, 1930. A few hours previously she had set out from Cardington, Bedfordshire, bound for Egypt—the first stop on her maiden voyage to India.

Costing more than £1 million, and as big as an ocean liner, the R 101 was the world's greatest airship. She was the pride of Britain and a centre of hope at a time of national depression. Should this voyage be successful, more airships would be built. Eventually there would be a regular airship service linking all the major countries in the Empire.

Her distinguished passengers, Lord Thomson, the Air Minister, among them, had gone contentedly to bed after an excellent dinner. Nevertheless, despite the six years' hard work which had gone into building the airship, all was not well. The engines had been giving trouble. The gigantic craft was flying so dangerously low that she was almost at rooftop height.

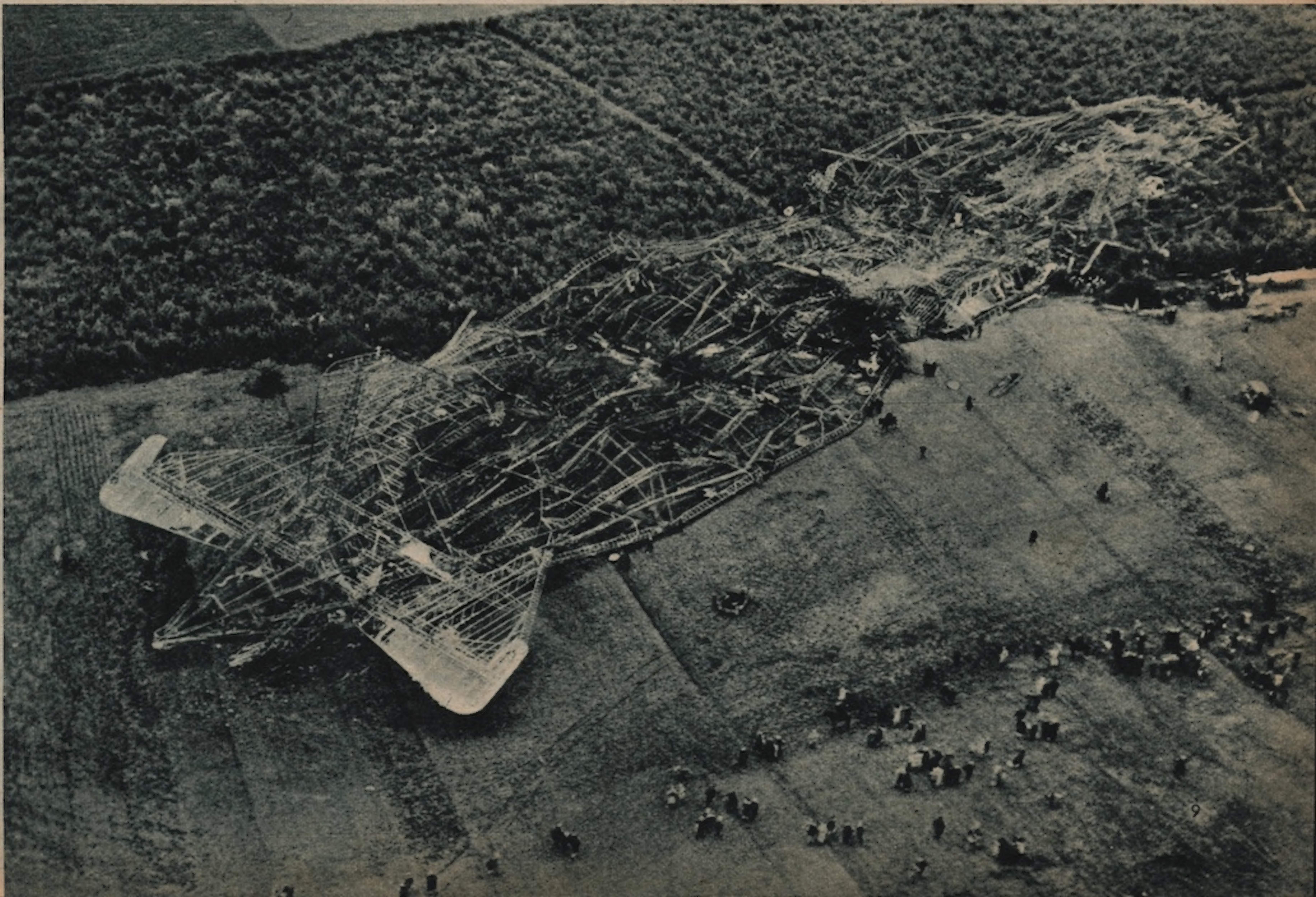
Her wireless operator began to check his position by signals from Le Bourget. At 1.45 a.m. on Sunday, October 5, an approximate crossbearing had been calculated by lines of intersection running from Valenciennes, ninety miles to the north-east, and from Le Bourget, forty miles to the south. The airship was roughly a kilometre north of Beauvais.

At 2.7 a.m. Le Bourget asked the airship for her speed, and



The R 101 moored to her mast at Cardington. As big as an ocean liner, she was the pride of all Britain. Then came her tragic first passenger flight . . .

Like the skeleton of a giant fish, the burned out wreckage of the airship lies near Beauvais, France. Of fifty-four men aboard, only six survived



September Moon

is a full-blooded story of the great green world of the countryside and its fascinating people . . . of a man's love for a girl, of hatred among the gipsy folk, of a farmer's lust for land. This exciting new novel by JOHN MOORE begins

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

again at 2.13 a.m. When there was no reply, the station operator asked: "Do you receive me? Do you receive me?"

Still no reply came, so he asked Valenciennes: "Have you anything from R 101 since one fifty?"

The answer was, "Nothing."

Minutes later Le Bourget discovered the reason, and, using the airship's registration number for the first time, sent the terrible news round the world:

"G-FAAW has caught fire."

THE journey was to have been by far the most important ever undertaken by a British airship.

Hitherto, although balloon and airship flights had been made regularly since 1910, particularly —and most successfully—by the Germans, and although airship construction was advanced in America, which had a monopoly of the non-inflammable gas, helium, British airships had not been notably successful.

Eight of them had been built for a total cost of about £2,300,000. Six had burst; two were never completed.

The R 101 was intended to change this tale of misfortune.

The airship's size was comforting. She was so large that, even before her construction could be started, the existing airship shed at Cardington had to be extended in length from seven hundred feet to eight hundred feet, and raised in height from 110 feet to 157 feet—an increase that made it the largest building in the British Empire.

As for the airship, she contained two miles of longitudinal steel girders, six miles of booms, or smaller girders, and eight miles of side and base struts. The bracing cables that pulled in her huge sides represented a total length of eleven miles, and she carried twelve miles of webs and twenty-seven miles of tubing of various kinds. Four hundred and fifty thousand rivets held together this flying leviathan. The seventeen gas-bags inside her huge frame that provided her lifting power, gigantic peas in a mammoth silvery pod, could not have been accommodated in the entire length of Westminster Abbey. Nothing so large, so complex and so expensive had ever flown before.

At that time it was widely believed that the future of long-distance air travel lay with airships which could soar through the air, secure in the gas that supported them and in their own great size. Aeroplanes were regarded as having little future. They were clever toys, but really not much more.

The first route chosen for an airship service was to India. It was believed that a giant airship could do the trip in seventy-four hours—against the seventeen days needed for a sea voyage. Gradually, as the service progressed, other airships would be built until a fleet of six was carrying ten tons of mail and up to 150 passengers twice a week to India.

Nine Conservative Government committees examined this idea, but the Conservatives lost office before anything definite could be done. Their successors, the Socialists, did not feel that private firms should build all the airships, since they wanted to show the superiority of State enterprise. So that both private enterprise and the State should compete, it was decided that the Royal Airship Works at Cardington would build one airship, the R 101, of a certain size and speed, and the Airship Guarantee Company, Ltd., which was an offshoot of Vickers, would build another, the R 100, of similar performance. Then the public would be able to see which produced the better airship; public or private enterprise.

In the eyes of the British public, the policy had the elements of a sporting contest, and, therefore, must be good. At the beginning, at least, no one thought of difficulties. But the design and eventual construction work involved was tremendous—a fact that the public was encouraged to ignore, for one announcement promised that the R 101 would make her first trip to India well within three years; that is, by the early spring of 1927.

This early completion date was hailed as a magnificent achievement. It was much more than that: it was impossible, as Lieutenant-Colonel Vincent Richmond, the chief designer of the R 101, hinted when he addressed a luncheon of the Bedford Rotary Club in March, 1926, on the subject of airships and their future. Someone asked him when his own airship would be ready, and he replied cautiously that she was due to be finished at the end of the next year, but he asked for sympathetic consideration of that estimate, "owing to the experimental nature of the work."

This was the first admission that delays were likely and, by April, 1927, little had been done about even laying her down. Work on the R 100 was already at an advanced stage.

ESTIMATES of expenditure at Cardington during the first three years of work amounted to £770,000. Yet, despite criticisms about cost which were levelled at Lord Thomson, there is no doubt that the size and even the expense of the R 101 added much to the legend of her invincibility. Since she was bigger than anything that had ever been built to fly, and embodied far more new ideas, it seemed to follow as a natural consequence that she would be the best and the safest.

In mid-November, 1926, at an Imperial Conference in London, the Prime Ministers of the Dominions most likely to be affected by the airship service inspected a scale model of her and pronounced themselves greatly impressed. At least one observer with the party was astounded at the air of opulence.

"The R 101," he wrote afterwards, "will be an aerial hotel."

The entrance hall, with the main staircase leading to the cabins and the lounge, was very like that of a great ship. The large white-and-gold lounge in which the passengers could take their ease was designed to accommodate a hundred people and measured sixty feet by thirty-three feet. Some of the pillars that gave added dignity to the surroundings were covered in royal blue velvet, and wicker seats with pneumatic cushions lined the walls. Small movable tables, like card tables, and wicker chairs were in the centre of the room for writing or card games.

At the far end of the lounge, which had huge potted palms in the corners, three steps led up to a promenade where passengers could sit in deck-chairs and look down through long, wide windows at the country over which they were flying.

The danger of an explosion from the hydrogen that filled the gas-bags within most airships was

Wing Commander Colmore (left) and Major Scott (right) worked on the R101

always so great that smoking could never be countenanced. But the R 101 was unique in having a fireproof smoking-room. There, surrounded by five and a half million cubic feet of hydrogen, officers and passengers could sit back in safety in wicker armchairs and enjoy their pipes, cigarettes or cigars.

Passengers were to sleep two to a cabin in ship's-type bunks, one up and one down. These bunks had sides of netting to prevent a restless sleeper from pitching out on to the rug that lay on the polished floor. Under the bottom bunk, towards the foot, hot air was blown through a metal grating from a complicated system of ventilation pipes. This was essential, since the airship, being so large and covered only with the thinnest skin of fabric, with currents of air purposely blown in from the bow as she travelled along to keep the air pressure inside the same as that outside, always felt bitterly cold, even in warm weather.

The news that the R 101 would have steel girders came as a surprise to many airship experts, for duralumin or three-ply wood had been the chief materials used in previous airships. One of the few traditional features to be incorporated in the design was the use of membranes from the intestines of bullocks for making the gas-bags. The membranes had all been specially imported from meat-canning firms in Chicago, and it was estimated that more than a million bullocks contributed to enable the R 101 to take the air.

Various experiments were carried out concerning the method of treating the fabric that would cover the frame. In previous airships—and in the successful German Zeppelins—the canvas had been stretched over the frames and then sprayed or brushed with dope. Under a new scheme the fabric was doped first and then stretched over the girders in the belief that it would thus be both lighter and tighter.

The scheme was not successful, for the fabric appeared to absorb moisture and consequently to shrink and rot and shred.

Eventually the whole envelope had to be stripped off and replaced with new canvas which would be doped in the conventional way. The ship contained miles and miles of girders against which the fabric was stretched, and to make sure that not a shred remained was a most formidable task.

Squadron Leader Ralph Booth, the captain of the R 100, who is now a wing commander and retired from the Royal Air Force, clearly remembers handling a piece of the original fabric and watching it flake like charred paper. He believes it is possible that some tiny part of the fabric remained on a high girder, and in the storm that raged during the airship's last flight it tore and let in the rain. But no one will ever know for sure.

At last, at dawn on October 12, 1929, the world's greatest airship was taken from her shed for the first time. Everyone remotely concerned with her construction turned out of bed to see her.

Two days after being launched the airship made her first trial flight and flew round Bedford for five and a half hours, for most of that time on two engines only; there was some trouble with the others.

Before a subsequent test flight was scheduled, the Air Ministry asked if King George V would approve of a flight over Sandringham, where he was then in residence. The King agreed to the flight.

By half past eleven one morning, R 101 was droning over Sandringham at sixty miles an hour. The day—like every day when the airship was taken out—was fine and sunny, and the sunlight caught the hull so that it glittered like a mirror in the sky. The King and Queen stood on a gravel path near their house looking up at this aerial manifestation of their country's pre-eminence, as Major G. H. Scott, the Assistant Director of Airship Development, who was in command, turned the huge dirigible in three wide circles at a height of 1,500 feet above them.

As the airship flew out over King's Lynn, steamers sounded their sirens in salute. She turned over Cromer and then headed for Norwich, where dozens of workmen from Boulton and Paul's works—where sections of the R 101 had been made—came out to cheer the passing of the giant that they had helped to build. A small aeroplane took off from the company's airfield and flew alongside the R 101 in salute, like a pilot fish before a shark, emphasizing the airship's size.

It was then that someone remembered a remark that Dr. Eckener, the Zeppelin designer, had passed about the R 101 when he had been shown the original drawings.

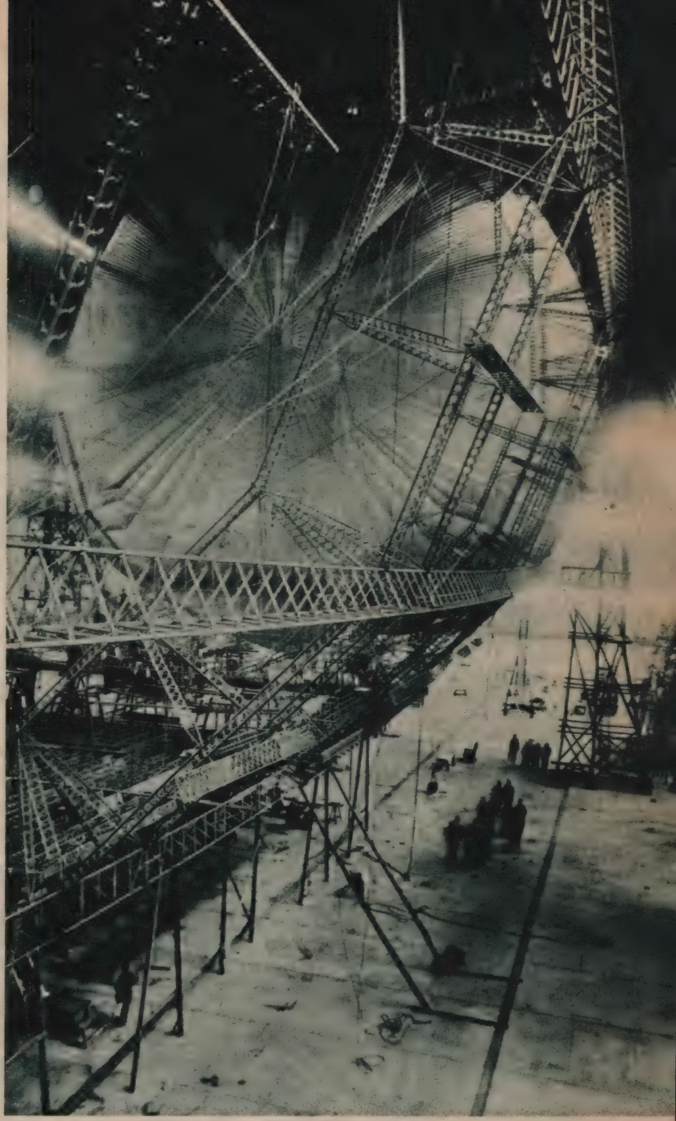
"Very nice," he said slowly in his precise Teutonic way. "But—isn't it a little big?"

On November 17, 1929, the R 101 set off on what was afterwards called a magnificent flight. It lasted for more than thirty hours—the longest time she had ever been airborne.

She left Cardington at 10.35 a.m. By one o'clock she was over Scampton, near Lincoln, and three hours later over Tyneside. At six o'clock she was seen over Edinburgh and by eight o'clock watchers in Glasgow saw the long glow from her lounge windows in the evening sky. At 9.15 p.m. she was above Belfast. Then she turned back and in the very early hours of the next day passed over the Isle of Man. She went on to Blackpool, and then down over Dublin and back to Cardington by way of Holyhead and Chester. The average speed had been roughly sixty miles an hour.

Until the end of that month the airship flew

Continued on page 29



It took six years to make the R 101. To give her more lift, after trial flights she had to be cut in half and have a further gas-bag inserted

The passengers' dining room, like the rest of the accommodation, was on a big scale. The airship was called "an aerial hotel"

Lord Thomson, Air Minister, and Colonel Richmond (left), the airship designer. Thomson was determined to be on her first passenger flight

Flight Lieutenant Irwin, the R 101 captain, had doubts about the trip

Walter Radcliffe was brought out of the crash alive, but he died later

Bobby Locke, on the eighteenth green, wins this year's British Open Championship. It was the fourth time he had won the Open

Golf's high and mighty home

by JOHN SANDILANDS

At St. Andrews they rule the fairways of the world. On its links kings and crooners tread the sacred turf with champions

Bing Crosby played J. K. Wilson, a local builder, in the 1950 Amateur Championship—and lost

THE four Americans were paying their first visit to the Old Course at St. Andrews. On the first tee Jimmie Alexander, the course "starter," took their green fees, handed them their score cards and told them the starting time for their round.

Traffic is heavy on the Old Course at the height of the season and there was a quarter of an hour's delay. The Americans were not put out. Seating themselves beside the tee they began, with deep concentration, to fill in their "scores."

"When they had finished they sent a caddie for envelopes and stamps," says Alexander. "Their 'performance' on the Old Course was on the way to their friends back home before they had hit a ball."

Alexander, a gruff Scotsman of sixty-three who lost a hand on the Somme in the first World War, viewed the Americans' deceit with tolerance. After thirty years controlling the flow of players round the Old Course—a period in which he has set nearly a million golfers off from the first tee—he is fully aware of the course's significance to the golfing world.

The venue of this year's British Open Championship, it is one of the oldest, one of the most difficult and easily the best respected golf links in existence.

It is also the course of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, the game's headquarters, and, although Britain's superiority in the game has gone elsewhere, it remains universally acknowledged as "the home of golf."

Each year the Old Course attracts about ten thousand overseas visitors besides at least twice as many home players. "They range," says Alexander, "from the game's best exponents to the world's worst—complete rabbits determined to say that they have played the course."

Whatever their golfing abilities, visitors are united by a respect amounting to reverence for the links. Recently Alexander was approached by an old lady with a request for a flower-pot full of turf from one of the fairways to take back to America; and there has always been a brisk demand for divots displaced by famous golfers during championship matches.

The small stone hut by the first tee which is Alexander's office looks out over the 6,683 yards

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T ALLOWED
GREENS.

Comedians take St. Andrews very seriously. "Even Bob Hope stopped wisecracking," says Jimmie Alexander

The ceremonial cannon is fired as Lord Brabazon plays himself into the 1952-53 club captaincy

of the course, set out on a thumb-shaped spit of land between the Firth of Forth and the estuary of the Eden River, thirty-three miles north-east of Edinburgh.

A wild expanse of grass dunes, sand and yellow whin bushes, the Old Course has a rugged appearance which has frequently shocked players used to the more cultured aspect of modern courses.

Besides the profusion of natural traps for mis-hit shots, the course is so narrow that, apart from the first, ninth, seventeenth and eighteenth, outgoing and incoming holes share the same green, with the flags at either end. The largest of these greens is over an acre in extent, a circumstance that makes putts of up to 150 feet a frequent occurrence.

Some hazards are of such magnitude that they have become almost as well known as the course itself. Several of the bunkers are named after the players who found their difficulties most confounding, and copies of many of the holes have been incorporated in other courses all over the world.

ST. ANDREWS profits from its continuity, most holes remaining much as they were at its inception in the twelfth century and providing a direct line on golfing "form" down the years. It is recognized as an ideal test of playing ability. But perhaps its greatest status arises from the presence of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club.

The R. and A., which formulated the first generally accepted code for the game, is still, through its Rules of Golf Committee, the final arbiter of golfing disputes in every country in the world outside America.

Barred to women, limited to a maximum of a thousand members and including such notable honorary members as President Eisenhower, Prince Philip and Viscount Montgomery, the club retains an exclusiveness in keeping with its position.

Ten years ago professionals were allowed to use the clubhouse for the first time in its history, but the rule that no one may enter without being introduced by a member is still strictly observed. In 1952 Danny Kaye, travelling to Dundee for a stage appearance, broke his journey at St. Andrews for a round on the Old Course and walked alone into the clubhouse to ask for facilities to change. He was promptly requested to leave and did so without demur.

The ponderous dignity of the R. and A. and the veneration accorded the Old Course make them an ideal target for the two thousand men and women students of St. Andrews University.

An ancient cannon, which is fired on selected ceremonial occasions, disappeared from the spot near the clubhouse where it had stood for at least a hundred years shortly before it was due to mark the start of a competition.

"The first search went straight to the grounds of the university," says Alexander, "but it was found, with only minutes to spare, on the brink of a bathing pool three hundred yards away and hauled back in the nick of time."

The close proximity of the imposing, grey sandstone façade of the R. and A. clubhouse makes the first tee of the Old Course an unnerving introduction to the hazards of the round.

In one competition a well-known player hooked his first drive so badly that it shot through the front door of one of the hotels bordering the start of the course and had to be retrieved from the end of a corridor.

The final green, also within sight of the long windows of the R. and A. clubhouse has seen physical collapse at the end of championship rounds. Dick Burton, winner of the 1939 Open title, had to be supported to the clubhouse by two policemen after his closing putt, and in another Open Henry Cotton sank to the steps leading from the green at the end of his round.

The course produces one of its most nerve-racking ordeals, however, in the annual "driving-in" ceremony which marks the election of the captain of the R. and A., the most coveted office in golf.

At 8 a.m. on the third Wednesday in September the new captain steps on to the first tee to seal his appointment with a single drive down the fairway. Apparently simple, the gesture is complicated by the invariable attendance of a large and critical crowd and the firing of the cannon as the stroke is being made.

In addition, the course caddies station themselves down the fairway at the spot where they estimate the ball will land, the successful "fielder" receiving the reward of a sovereign.

The captaincy of the R. and A. is not necessarily awarded wholly for golfing ability and the ceremony, more than two hundred years old, has proved a severe strain for a number of performers. When the Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales, drove himself in—an occasion on which, said one observer, "the caddies stood disloyally close to the tee"—his shot was short and hooked to the left. A similar shot on the first tee has been known as a "Prince of Wales" ever since.

King George VI, as Duke of York, fared better, hitting a confident two hundred yard drive straight down the middle.

Although the R. and A. operates the Old Course, the course belongs to St. Andrews Royal Burgh—together with the other courses at St. Andrews: the New, Jubilee and Eden—and its maintenance costs are shared by the two bodies.

As a result any member of the public can play over the Old Course for a fee of 5s. a round, except when championship meetings are in progress.

The natives of St. Andrews, some seventy-five per cent of whom are golfers, take a proprietorial view of the links and on Sundays, when golf is prohibited on the Old Course, they use it as a popular walk and meeting place.

Alexander became starter on the Old Course on his discharge from the Black Watch in 1919. The rigid system of bookings for a round on the course—starting times are allocated through a ballot held on the previous day—has made his job vital to the smooth running of the links. Nobody may tee-off on the Old Course until Alexander has checked the ballot list, the clock and the traffic on the first fairway. Golfers, whatever their status, are forced to conform to the regulations.

Alexander's firm handling of any infringements of course tradition and his shout of "Play away, please," with which he sets players on their way, have made him known to golfers all over the world.

A stern upholder of the dignity of the course—he admits that even the R. and A. allows for occasional levity.

Before the last war four members of the club, wearing full evening dress, played a match on the Old Course at midnight, using the headlights of parked cars for illumination. Alexander got the proceedings under way by letting off a squib.

THE END

SANDY was a soldier's boy

by DAVID WALKER

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

They said he was a hero, but Sandy was not happy in his mind. He felt that it was all a mistake

COLONEL SPENS stared coldly at Sandy McBain. "Silly little boy," he said contemptuously. "How dare you make us insult your father!" and then he said: "You let the regiment down. . . ."

Sandy, the ten-year-old son of Pipe Major Donald McBain of the Black Watch—Sandy was in trouble again. Ever since the battalion had come to Altnadean to guard the Secret Place, the atomic research establishment in the hills, Sandy had been in one scrape or another.

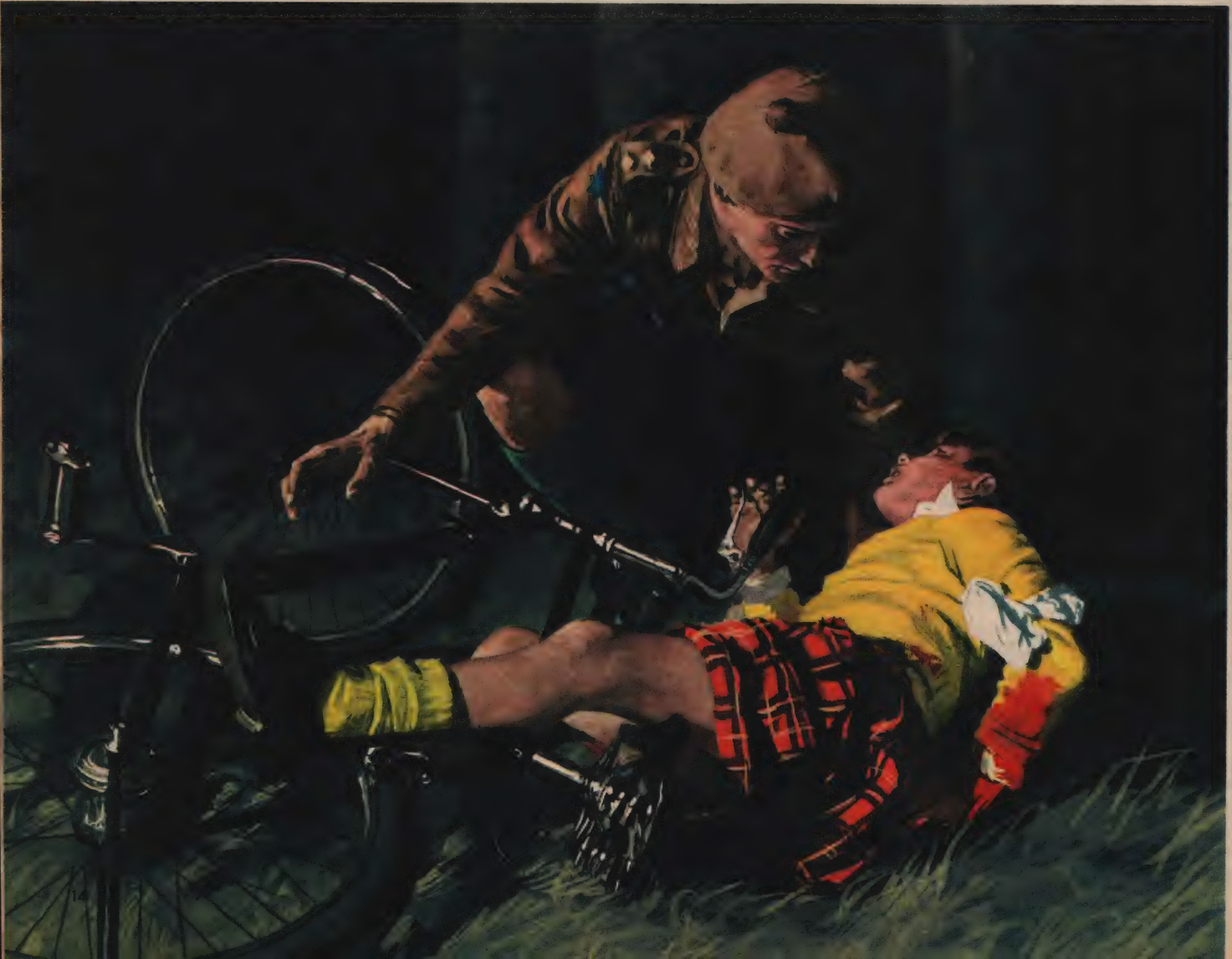
Till now, his worst had been the damage he'd caused with his catapult to Miss Abigail's greenhouse. Miss Abigail was the colonel's aunt; for weeks Sandy had worked in the gardens of the big house to pay for the glass.

But now he was in his worst, blackest trouble of all—and it was Sheila, the colonel's daughter, who had put the vinegar into the whisky jigger. She thought that old Smodger, the colonel's batman, would drink it. Instead, somehow, it was taken into the officer's mess where Sandy's father, the pipe major, was playing for the officers. Colonel Spens had offered him the jigger of vinegar. . . .

Since Sheila was long since away home, the blame fell on Sandy. He could not tell tales, either, since he would get both Sheila and old Smodger into trouble. So he was silent and listened to the contempt in the colonel's voice.

Suddenly the adjutant came in with a teletype message. He ignored Sandy. There was

His arm was hurting worse and worse, but he must get to warn the regiment. "Colonel!" he gasped to Mr. Irwin. "Enemies on the hill!"



a sort of electric tightness in the air as Colonel Spens read the message. Sandy guessed it was something to do with the international crisis which all the grown-up people talked about.

Then the colonel noticed Sandy as you might notice a slug or something in the garden. "Go home," the colonel said. He spoke clipped and fast to the adjutant.

The silly little boy went home. "Go up to your bed," his mother said, and that was all she said. The pipe major had told her what Sandy did, but Sandy had not done it. . . .

FINAL INSTALMENT

Sandy Bears A Grudge

SANDY awoke. He was hot, pyjamas sticking to him, safe again from his bad dream. *Go up to your bed,* he had dreamed, and *Get down out o' that old apple tree. Silly little boy, you let the regiment down.*

"Sandy!"

The door was just beside his bed. He opened it. The light was on downstairs, and Mum stood in her dressing-gown, and Sandy started thinking: Get Auntie Ethel, ring Doctor Swanson, ring the cottage hospital, ring Jimmy Thoms to bring the car. But Dad was here to be taking charge.

"You all right, Mum?" She was heavy with the bairn, and sleepy-eyed, and bonny, too.

"Ay," she said. So it was not Mum's time come yet. "You were shouting in your sleep," she said.

He sometimes talked and shouted in his sleep, but lately Dad was the one who came to ease him. "Is Dad away, Mum?" Sandy asked.

"Ay," she said. "Your dad's away." She looked up here to Sandy from the bottom of the stairs. "A night scheme, some kind of practice, so he said."

Sandy began to remember things, or were they dreams? *Trouble, sir?* asked Smodger quietly in his nothing-could-surprise-old-Smodger sort of way. *Better say a night scheme,* said the colonel.

"Was there anything about it on the wireless, Mum?"

"No," she said. "What would there be about a night scheme on the wireless?"

"I dinna ken," he said.

"It's half past four," she said. "Go back to sleep." His mother stood there, looking up at him. "Oh, Sandy," said his mother. "How could you ever do a thing like yon?"

Then all the real things, *things like yon,* came flying at him. Sandy shut his door to shut his mum and everyone away. The rain had stopped, but there was dripping from the roof. The wind was less. The old moon and the clouds were racing, chasing, meeting, hiding up beyond his window. There was a muttering of motors from along the glen, short bursts and muttering again, trucks moving into place or out of place, not travelling.

All the village slept until a cock began to crow. The cock stopped crowing, and the village slept, and Sandy's grudges boiled in him.

He had shut his door to shut his mum and everyone away. But they were here. And Sandy thought: Sheila did it and she ran off home. Smodger started it, putting Sheila up to it, leaving me to take the blame. Who said: *Say you're sorry to the mate,* which started Sheila off? Smodger said it.

Who knew Sheila was in the pantry too? Sergeant Urquhart knew. Did Sergeant Urquhart tell the colonel that Sheila might have done it? No, he wouldn't dare, and nor would Smodger, because Sheila is the colonel's daughter. So who gets all the blame from everyone for everything, not even thinking it mightn't have been me? They're all against me—Sheila, Smodger, Sergeant Urquhart, Dad and Mum, the colonel. Most of all the colonel.

All right, Sandy's demon said. *I'll show them.* He listened. The night outside was quiet, no lorries and no wind. His old tin-ticker ticked—one two three four, one two three four; did it go in beats of four? He put the light on, screwed his eyes against it; then they were accustomed. The time was twelve past five.

Sandy dressed. He brushed his hair. He looked at the awful face, redder than ever from weeks of working in the sun to pay his debts, the flapper ears, the one still puffy, black eye gone yellow now; even the fight that they blamed him for.

Sandy hated his awful face and everything and everyone.

He picked up his shoes. He listened. There was nothing in the house. A man shouted somewhere far away. He opened his door and listened again and tiptoed down the stair in stockinged feet. He knew each step, how to get down without a creak, and what he would do if his mother heard him—he would run. But she did not hear him.

He opened the cupboard—Dad's place for confiscated things—and took the catapult and put it in its old place, in his sporran pocket. He ate two digestive biscuits in the kitchen, drank a glass of milk, went out, put on his shoes. He had left his bike outside last night. He did not care about his bike. They would take that from him too.

Auntie Ethel's cat, called Jet, came rubbing, mewing round his leg. He shoved the black tomcat away. He wheeled his bicycle to the street.

Sandy McBain rode east. There was a rain-smell in the air, and no wind now, except the wind of travelling. The dawn was coming up. *Red sky in the morning, a shepherd's warning,* Sandy thought. The field of oats beside the road was half uncut and half in stook; too wet for harvesting today.

The last owl hooted. The first oyster-catcher cried down at the River Dean. Sandy was alone. He pedalled east, uphill. Left pedal: *Sheila and Smodger did it on purpose, yes they did.* Right pedal: *They thought of it before, together, yes they did.* Then Sergeant Urquhart, Dad, Mum, the colonel, pedal, pedal, pedal, pedal; the colonel, pedal, *Silly little boy, you let the regiment down.*

Then everyone: Mr. Mackenzie, Auntie Ethel, and the R.S.M., pedal, pedal, pedal. Even Geordie MacTaggart and Miss Abigail, yes, even they would be against him if they got the chance.

Sandy was alone. He was going up the hill to be more and more alone. And after that he knew what he would do. His thumb was better. He could manage the catapult with his bandaged thumb.

HE turned north to climb the hill road to the gate where he had swung the first time. It was steeper. He crossed back and forth across the road, and then it was too steep. He walked.

A light wind blew now from the east. The wind came with the dawn, and for a minute all the eastern sky was flaming green, gold, pink—scarlet as the jackets round the dinner table.

And then the colours of the dawn were swallowed up. The North Sea clouds came rolling in. It was six o'clock, and day was here, a first murky day after fine weather and before the autumn.

The swallows were gathering for autumn, a hundred of them perching on two wires that took the telephone to Drumfechan, twittering and flying off and back to perch again. The swallows were restless for their journey.

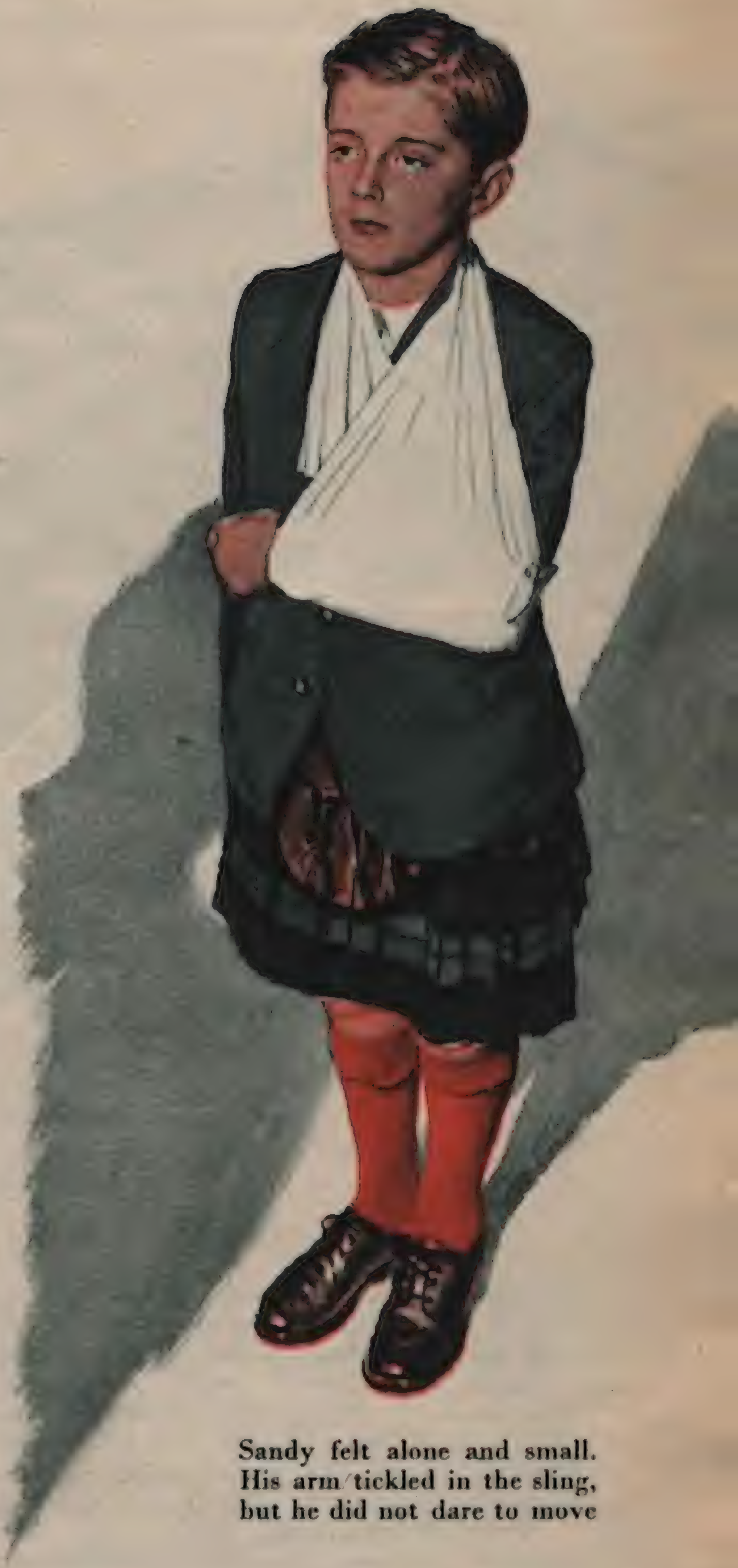
"Sandy!"

He could see Altnadean Big-house from here. He saw Sheila running and disappear. Then she came through the small gate in the wall. It was steep, but he got on his bike and rode again, and he heard her panting after him.

"Sandy!"

"Awa' hame!" he shouted back at her.

"But he said I was to find you and to tell you he was sorry the very first thing this morning, that's why I'm up, and I just saw you. . . . Please wait, Sandy."



Sandy felt alone and small. His arm tickled in the sling, but he did not dare to move

Who said to find him? Smodger did. And sorry! "Och leave me be."

"Where are you going?" Sheila's voice was high.

"None o' your business," Sandy called. He saw the gate away ahead. He rode for it. He rode harder and harder for it. He passed the low arch where the burn ran through the wall, where he had gone the first time of the greenhouse.

"You mustn't go up there, Sandy. It's dangerous. You mustn't."

Sandy stopped. He turned to look at Sheila. He used to think that they were pals, but Sheila was a High-Up. She walked now, out of breath.

"Get away back where you belong." And then he called to Sheila with all his hating everything and most of all her dad, the colonel: "Miss Sheila!"

"You're mean," she said in a small still voice. "You're mean to me." Sheila turned and went back home to Altnadean Big-house where she belonged and Sandy McBain did not belong.

He came to the gate. The sign on the gate was new, red letters on white paint, and it said: DANGER. KEEP OUT.

He slid back the bar. The gate swung down. He pushed the bicycle through. He did not shut

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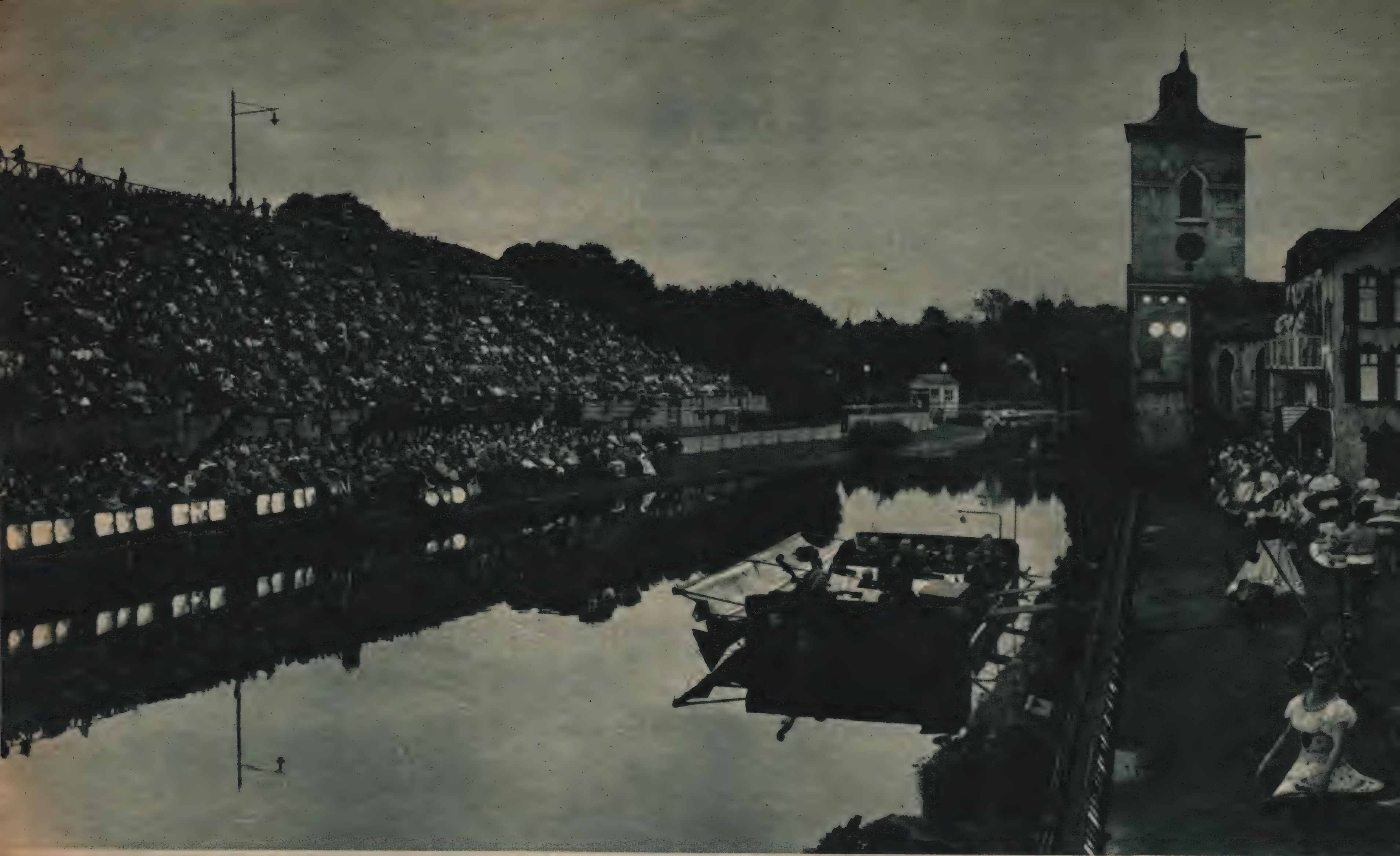


Scarborough's open-air theatre holds nearly nine thousand people, who watch the show across seventy feet of water. Now, in its jubilee year, the

Your holiday show takes the water

by *ANTHONY HANCOX*

At the world's only theatre on a lake the orchestra plays in a floating tank and the actors make their entrance by boat

THE famine scene in the 1947 production of *Hiawatha* was building up to its climax, the death of Minnehaha. In the words of the theatre programme, "Winter gripped the valley; fever and famine stalked abroad." The two hundred members of the cast, dressed as Indians, lay beneath blankets as they sang: "We are starving; give us food." At that moment a flock of ducks swam into view on the lake with a loud "Quack-quack-quack!"

"The ducks had been in trouble before," says Maurice Willcox, who is secretary of the Scarborough Amateur Operatic Society. "When we performed *Merrie England* they quacked all the way through the singing of 'O Peaceful England.' We banished them to Peasholm Park lake, a quarter of a mile away."

The ducks were taken to their new home by members of Scarborough Corporation parks department. A week later Willcox noticed a traffic hold-up on a nearby road. He found the ducks, led by the mother, walking in procession over the road, waddling back to the theatre's lake. He has not tried to exile them again.

Scarborough's open-air theatre is the only theatre-on-a-lake in the world. Its stage is an island 280 feet long, with a hill in front for an auditorium and a hill behind for a backcloth. In this setting the operatic society presents an annual summer show with a chorus and ballet of two hundred unpaid amateurs, led by a dozen professionals. Audiences watch the players across seventy feet of water.

In 1932 Scarborough Corporation was developing the site for pleasure boating and 12,000 tons of earth had been excavated to form the lake. "Then people standing on the hills noticed they could hear quite clearly the conversations of men working on the new island," says Willcox. "Experts said that putting the water into the valley had given it excellent acoustics."

The corporation spent £60,000 on making it into a theatre, despite opposition from ratepayers who said that it would be ruined by the weather. Now, in its silver jubilee year, the theatre has a balance sheet recording eighteen financially successful shows out of twenty. The shows have been seen by 2,100,000 people.

Willcox, a forty-four year old accountant with spectacles and thinning hair, has a list of theatrical props which includes a giant raft, canoes, rowing boats, illuminated dolphins and swans, and water-ballet costumes.

The raft was first used in *The Pageant Of Faust*. The producer of the show asked for a floating stage, thirty feet by twenty feet, to hold a ballet. He wanted rows of coloured lights shining upward through a platform made entirely of glass.

Willcox called in a famous glass firm for advice. The firm supplied 384 pieces of toughened glass, each fifteen inches square, to cover the raft's framework, but warned that even this glass would powder if struck with a sharp object. Fearing that artists might be injured, Willcox made an inspection before each show to ensure that nobody boarded the raft wearing shoes with sharp heels or steel tips. Thirty ballet girls danced over the glass for fifteen performances without accident.

The raft has been used in several shows, but at one time it threatened to sink. Willcox sought a way to give it extra buoyancy and in a scrap yard at Hull found eight ex-War Department Carley floats which he bought for ten shillings each. They were fitted under the raft and lifted it above the danger line. Willcox wanted more of the floats this year, but was quoted £70 each for new ones. With an accountant's eye on the show's budget he got an engineer friend to seal some old water cisterns. They were fitted and cost nothing.

When a royal barge was wanted for Princess Cristiane in *King's Rhapsody* last year Willcox bought a twenty-five foot boat in Scarborough harbour. One evening the boat ran aground fifty

theatre is producing *White Horse Inn*

feet from where the princess was to land. She was able to gather her stately robes and jump ashore, but she had to push her way through thick bushes to reach the main stage. A queen, who had been waiting to greet the princess, continued with her lines: "I hope you have had a pleasant journey."

The following day Willcox examined the lake and discovered that the level of the water had dropped. He promptly sent a letter to the corporation, asking that the level be regularly examined and maintained. Subsequently, the princess made her landings without mishap.

Willcox's chief worry is the same each season: the weather. "If it rains we try to carry on as long as an audience is prepared to stay," he says. Sometimes the downpours have been too heavy, and the players have had to seek refuge in the dressing-rooms.

The society's worst season for rain was in 1938 when it presented *Tannhäuser* with a fifty-piece orchestra. During one performance the harpist broke twenty-seven rain-soaked strings, the pads on the clarinet keys grew soggy, and the violin bows became sticky. "Everything got out of tune and the noise was awful," says Willcox.

The orchestra pit, a large oblong tank which floats in front of the stage, had no cover. It was thought that a cover would obstruct the audience's view. Willcox puzzled over the problem for many months until one day he saw the hood being opened on a baby's perambulator. It gave him the idea of fitting the tank with a very low pull-over canopy which did not reach above the level of the stage.

The shows run from June to September and are presented every Monday and Thursday. When a performance is spoiled by rain it is postponed until the next evening. If it is rained off again, the performance is cancelled and ticket money refunded. In the twenty seasons—there were no shows during the war—there have been about a score of postponements and only three cancellations, in 1935, 1945 and 1952.

However, when it does rain there is no shelter for the audience. "It is very disheartening to see thousands of people crouched in their seats and holding newspapers and programmes over their heads," says Willcox. "When I announce that we are holding up a performance because of the rain I always add that we will try to resume later. If there is applause I know that the audience is willing to stay. If the announcement is met with silence I ring up the local bus company and ask them to take people home as quickly as possible."

The society's biggest piece of scenery was wrecked in a gale. The scenery, a representation of Notre Dame Cathedral, forty-five feet high and ninety-five feet wide, was a feature of *The Vagabond King* in 1950. The gale blew it down on a Monday, a few hours before a show.

Warned by telephone, Willcox hurried to a rival theatre where he persuaded the manager to lend him two scenic painters. The men were still at work, in full view of the audience, for ten minutes after the evening performance had begun, but the show did not lose the striking effect of a floodlit Notre Dame.

Willcox is an accountant who always wanted to follow other members of his family into the theatre. He has compromised by doing both jobs. In office hours he is a partner in an accountancy business; during the evenings and at weekends he is the society's paid secretary. In his accountants' office, where the attics and cellars are stuffed with theatrical equipment, he handles a show budget which for each of the last three productions has totalled £28,000.

While one show is running the next is chosen by the society's twelve-member committee, which includes five housewives. In December Willcox travels to London with William Medd, the society's seventy-five year old chairman, and other committee men to audition artists for the principal rôles. In January the ballet begins rehearsals in local schoolrooms, followed in March by the chorus. The professional producer arrives five weeks before opening night.

"I am juggling with the show's budget right up to that last fortnight," says Willcox. "There is no telling what the producer may want."

In *The Vagabond King* a swimmer was needed to double for Prince Siegfried and "commit suicide" by leaping from a twenty-five foot tower into the lake. The water by the tower was only five feet deep. A professional swimmer asked £10 a performance, but Willcox refused to pay and explained his problem to members of the local swimming club.

One of the swimmers, Derek Mennell, agreed to make the jumps. He leaped into the darkened lake for twenty-one performances, wearing thick pads of sponge rubber on his feet to cushion his fall. He did not charge for his services.

The props for *Robin Hood*, staged in 1949, included an improvised apparatus for a flying ballet. Several ballet girls were doubtful about their safety when asked to climb the twenty-five foot tower to try out their harnesses.

"I do not like heights, but there was only one thing to do," says Willcox. "I put on an elf's costume, climbed the tower, got into a harness and floated down on to the stage. After that the girls had no qualms."

Willcox was trained as an accountant because his father, a professional concert party entertainer, forbade him to enter the theatre on the ground that there was no money in it. His mother was a director of a cinema company; he had an uncle who was a theatre musical director and another who was a theatre musician.

BORN in Alnwick, Northumberland, Willcox is married and has three children, Richard, seventeen, Mary, thirteen, and Doreen, seven. He met his wife, Dorothy, when she took part in one of the society's indoor winter shows, *The Desert Song*, in 1936.

In the same year he became the society's secretary and within twelve months had convinced the Customs and Excise authorities that the shows should be free of entertainments tax. He argued that the society was non-profitmaking and that its chief object was "to encourage the study and production of opera and other educational enterprises." The tax was reimposed in 1955 after the society had changed from opera to American musicals.

By that time, Willcox claims, the society had been saved £45,000. The society's rules forbid profit distribution to members and the money is spent on new equipment, given to charities and put into a reserve fund "against a rainy day."

Willcox has imported a rain-making machine for this year's show, *White Horse Inn*. The illusion of rain is created in darkness by revolving a slotted disc in front of an arc lamp. The producer wanted to complete the effect by giving an umbrella to every member of the two hundred cast. Willcox got the umbrellas for nothing by putting an appeal in a local newspaper.

"There is a saying that if you take out an umbrella it will not rain," he says. "With two hundred umbrellas on the stage we ought to be perfectly safe." THE END

As secretary, Maurice Willcox supervises a dress fitting. Costumes for *Annie Get Your Gun* were stolen by boys for a cowboy game. Willcox tracked them down on hills round the theatre

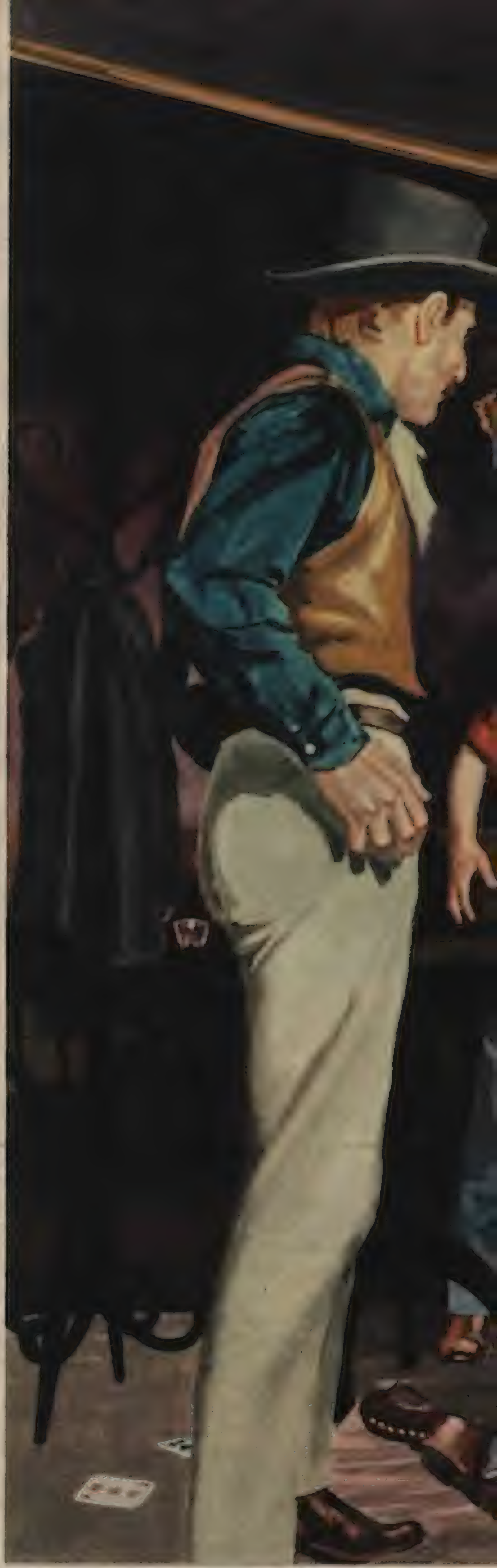
JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

The Forbidden Range

by *JOHN L. SHELLEY*

ILLUSTRATED BY FANCETT

For these men the only law was that made by a gun. How could a woman dare to defy them?



Ed Sparks walked t

We got to this place called Middletown, in Kansas Territory, one morning in early September. I swear I don't know what it was supposed to be the middle of, unless it was a few thousand square miles of prairie. The main street was mostly saloons and gambling houses, nearly all with false fronts to brag of a height none of them had. Men in boots, both high-heeled and flat-heeled, clumped along in the dust, and the ladies picked up their long skirts to keep them from sweeping the street clean.

Our four big white oxen drew a lot of admiring looks from all sides as we came through the town, the giant Conestoga wagon rolling out thick ribbons of dust on both sides. They should have. We had paid more for them than for all the rest of the stuff combined, but Pa always said that, when a man travelled, his first thoughts should be of reaching the end of his journey. Only the man with good animals was pretty sure of getting where he was going.

There was one general store, and we stopped there to buy coffee and flour and such, even though the prices were high as a cat's back. Some things you just couldn't get off the land, and after you've been travelling by ox wagon for a few months you're bound to run out of them.

It was a sort of sweet torture for us five boys, after a steady diet of jack rabbit, beans and flapjacks, to wander around in that store with our noses twitching and our eyes eating up everything in sight. The worst was when we got to the candy counter and stood in silent, stair-step formation with our noses flattened against the glass.

Pa asked the storekeeper some questions about the country to the west, but didn't get much in the way of answers. The old man, who wore a burlap sack for an apron, kept glancing across the store at a couple of men who seemed to be watching us. They were both dressed in cowmen's clothes, and appeared mighty interested in a family of poor immigrants.

The old man looked at Pa's right arm in its sling.

"Bad?" he asked.

Pa nodded shortly and said: "Bad enough." He didn't say it had been smashed by a bullet when a gang of cattlemen had raided a camp of immigrants back at Soda Creek, but then Pa was always sort of close-mouthed. He took his change and handed a ten-cent piece of it back to the old man.

"Better give us all the hard candy this'll buy," he said. "I reckon boys and candy just naturally go together."

I was older than the rest of the boys and I knew better than they did how much that ten-cent piece meant to us, but that didn't stop me from enjoying my share.

Ma was at another counter, looking at some dress goods, and Pa went to loom over her and grin down into her upturned face. "Thinkin' of a Sunday-go-to-meetin' dress, ma'am?" I heard him ask her.

Ma folded back the piece of checked gingham she had been looking at and her small face lighted up like a Christmas tree stuck full of candles.

"You know my failing, Dave Bascom," she said, "and don't tease me about it. Colours are to me what food is to the starving." She moved against him for an instant, her hands gentle on his slung arm, and I could see Pa's face, smoothed out of granite and so soft it looked almost hazy.

Then she moved away and tossed her head at him. "This lallygagging is not getting us to Long Valley, while our land waits. Stir your lazy carcass and help the boys carry out the things."

We hadn't got a half-mile out of town when they came, the two who had been in the store and one other, a tall, handsome man wearing dress-up clothes and straddling the most beautiful black horse I had ever seen. The two others rode up in front and blocked the road while he stopped alongside the wagon. He took off his hat as the wagon groaned to a halt.

Pa was riding in front, and he wheeled to come back and range up alongside the tall man. I was riding Prince, off the right side of the wagon, so I stopped where I was. The four younger boys were riding in the wagon with Ma, and their heads came popping up from everywhere to see what was happening.

"Where are you headed?" the tall man asked.

"Out Long Valley way," Pa answered. "Why?"

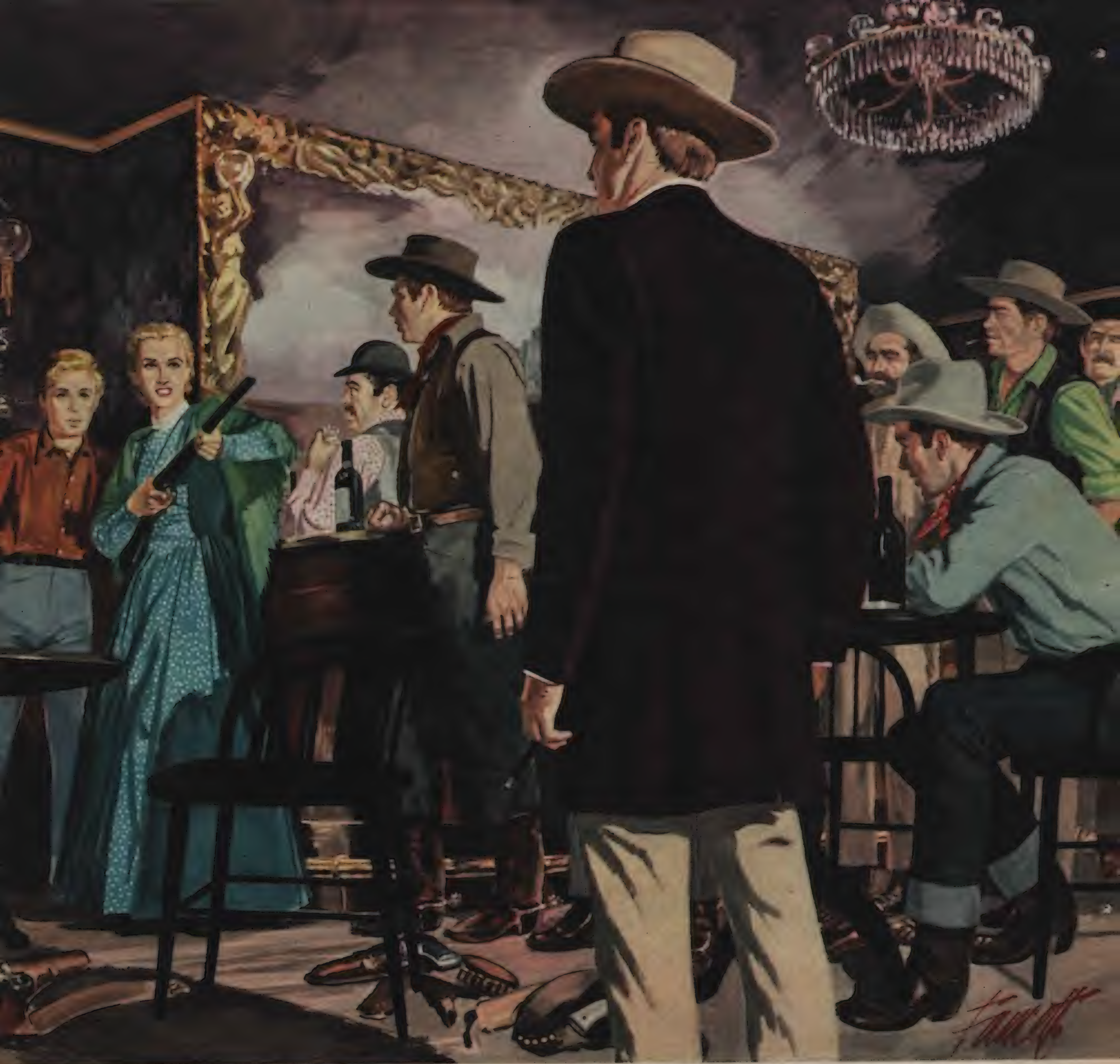
"Long Valley's a hundred miles." The tall man's voice was soft, but it carried strongly over to where I sat on Prince. "Can you make it?"

"Don't know why not. We got good oxen, enough supplies and everything else we need to make it."

The tall man looked at Pa silently for a moment. He was handsome, but he looked tired. The tiredness was in his voice when he spoke again. "Be sure you make it! The country you're coming to is graze land that has never seen a plough. After you cross the hills your choice is your own, but not here. If you have a plough in that rig, see that it doesn't touch the ground in this section."

Ma spoke up. "Why do you cattle people try to run the earth? All we ask is a piece of land where we can make our living and raise our boys to be good men. It's not as if we wanted to take anything away from others. We've met people on the back trail who were burned out and their stock and menfolks killed just because they didn't leave when the cattlemen told them to go."

You could see the tall man was studying Ma as something new in his land. The dust of travel couldn't hide how pretty she was and, if she talked like an educated person, it was because



wards us. Ma stood her ground, challenging the whole territory of Kansas. "That's close enough, Mr. Sparks," she said quietly

Pa had stolen her away from her teacher's desk back in Fort Wayne a dozen years before.

"I'm sorry it has to be this way, ma'am," he said, "but if one of you homesteaders gets a foothold in this graze land, it will be like a prairie fire. He'd be followed in by hundreds of others, and in ten years' time there wouldn't be a natural blade of grass for cows to eat."

"But you don't own this land." Ma was starting to get her back up and, though she was barely five feet tall, she was sure full of spirit. "This is free land, declared so by the government and open to settlement by anyone with the ambition and courage to leave their homes behind and make a new life."

He turned his horse to go, then twisted in the saddle and smiled, not really a smile at all.

"Madam, a man owns what he's man enough to hold. When enough men come here to take this land, the cows will turn into ploughs and nobody will ever see it the same again, but lots of grass will be turned into beef before that happens."

He waved an arm at the two other men, and they galloped on up the road in the direction we were going. . . .

That night in camp, Samuel leaned over close to me as we were eating our jack rabbit and beans. "Them men all had guns," he whispered.

"I know it." I shoved him away. I was feeling tired and cross. "Anybody could see them."

"Do you s'pose they'd of shot Pa if he argued?"

Suddenly the thought gave me a start, too. I felt as if a cold wind had blown across my back, and I shivered.

The next day we broke a wheel in a chuck hole. We had no choice but to camp where we were and make repairs. Luckily there was a creek nearby for water and plenty of grass for the stock, which consisted of our four white oxen, two milk cows, one with a calf, and the two horses Pa and I rode.

Pa couldn't do much on account of his bad arm, so Ma and Samuel and I did most of the work on the wheel. Near suppertime the job was done, but it was too late then to move on.

We had just finished supper when Pa looked down the road. "Big cloud of dust comin'," he told the rest of us. "Might be one man or an army, dusty as this road is. Oliver," he said to me, "go help Samuel and Henry with the stock, and take Abner and Michael with you. They'll be under foot here."

I took the two littlest boys over to the creek where the others were watching the stock, but I sneaked right back. I'd seen the two men that rode in, and they were the same ones that had

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Gulls seek a varied diet. They fly far in search of fish, mice, worms and scraps. Below: Simms uses a three-foot parabolic reflector to record distant song-birds

Hordes of squabbling neighbours

by ERIC SIMMS

Seagulls like to be sociable—but you don't make friends so easily when you're greedy and aggressive

One September morning I was standing on the fish quay at Peterhead in Scotland, among the drifters newly berthed from herring fishing in the North Sea. Lorries rumbled across the harbour walls, and winches, unloading the baskets of steel-blue fish, rattled and whined on every boat. But above the noise and bustle rose the trumpeting screams of the herring gulls which floated mast-high over the drifters or assembled in pearl-grey bunches on the roofs and sheds.

A few feet from me stood a basket of fish and, above it, beating and hovering, was a gull. At last he alighted on the basket's edge. In less than a minute he had gulped down seven herring and stood, rocking gently on the basket, with the tail of a fish showing in the corner of his bill.

Two fishermen roared angrily at him and he began to thrash the air with his wings. But his vastly increased weight would not allow him to take off. Out of his gullet shot two herrings and, as he staggered into the air, out came two more. Relieved of more than half his meal, he was finally able, like a surfeited vulture, to get airborne.

The herring gull is voracious and predatory by nature and will squabble with equal zest in the air or on the ground. With its pearly-grey adult mantle, flesh-coloured legs and red-spotted bill it is the commonest of the British gulls. Its self-assertiveness helps it greatly in its battle for survival and in recent years it has increased in numbers fairly rapidly.

New breeding colonies have been established in various parts of the country. My own counts of nests at a cliff colony in Aberdeenshire show that in 1948 there were seventy-five nests; in 1950, eighty-one; and in 1955 there were 121.

The increase has been confirmed by counts made elsewhere. On the island of Skokholm, off the Pembrokeshire coast, there were 250 pairs nesting in 1929. By 1939 the total had reached three hundred, and by 1949 it was 572. At the Isle of May in the Firth of Forth, the herring gull population has risen in twenty years from fifty pairs to nearly one thousand pairs.

The increase is not confined to the herring gull. Six species of gulls breed in Britain, and there has been a general rise in their numbers—undoubtedly affected by the growth of the fishing industry, for fish-offal has been discharged in ever increasing amounts not only in ports but far out at sea.

The arrogant great black-backed gull is the largest. The lesser black-backed and the herring gull are much the same size as each other, but the former has a dusky and the latter a pearly mantle. The common gull is rather like a small version of the herring gull. The black-headed gull is the smallest of those that breed in Britain. The last member of the group is an exclusively marine species, the kittiwake, which only visits land to nest. All have long and fairly broad wings, rather square cut tails and webbed feet. Their bills are strong and hooked and their flight is powerful. They can soar and glide with masterly ease.

Gulls are sociable birds, nesting generally in colonies. Even away from their breeding grounds they are often to be seen in groups or in the company of other birds.

In the breeding season at the Aberdeenshire colony the cliffs resound with a welter of noise hardly to be matched anywhere in the bird communities of Britain. As I sat in a crevice in a granite rock-face, I could hear the shrill *kitti-waaks* of the kittiwakes, the *kwuk-kwuk-kwuks* of the lesser black-backs, the high-pitched *kee-aas* of two foraging common gulls, the deep-throated guttural *uk-uk-uks* of the great black-backs and, above all, the strident trumpeting *kyee-ow, kyow-kyow-kyows* of the herring gulls.

In the winter months, herring gulls may be seen at many places far inland. I have watched them stamping their feet on a Birmingham playing field to bring up the worms, plunging into the Thames at Westminster for floating garbage, walking around the carriages in railway sidings, following the plough across the fields, taking bread from suburban gardens, and fighting with carrion crows for scraps on rubbish dumps.

Many of these birds are in the mottled, dusky-brown plumage of the immatures, for the herring gull does not reach its adult plumage until its fourth year. The first plumage is light umber brown, mottled with darker brown, and at the succeeding moults the brown areas are replaced by white and pearl-grey.

In winter, the breeding colonies are deserted while the adults forage along the coasts or pay visits inland. But in late February and early March the life of the colonies begins anew. In Aberdeenshire on warm afternoons in March I have watched flocks of herring gulls arrive, wheeling and calling stridently above the nesting cliffs. Then there has been a mass descent to their gathering ground.

It soon becomes clear that pairs are leaving the gathering place to take up positions on the ledges and shelves of the adjoining cliff face. Fairly certainly, pairs of herring gulls do not

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I REFUSED TO DIE • 5

by IAN MacHORTON

My last obstacle—a traitor with a gun

I had eluded the Japs and swum the Chindwin. But still I wasn't safe. One man barred my way to freedom—and he was out to kill

How many hours it took me to leave the mountains and reach the wilderness I do not know. By then I was in a state of semi-collapse. My leg wounds began to ache terribly and I was in desperate need of food and water.

Throughout that day I stumbled on beneath the scorching sun, clambering over burning rocks and stones. Not a living thing was to be seen anywhere, and the waterholes I came across were empty.

My sole comfort was that at least I was no longer a prisoner of the Japanese. Perhaps the luck which had enabled me to escape from them unnoticed would hold. Perhaps after all, quite soon in that spring of 1943, I would succeed in getting out from behind the enemy lines in Burma and return to my Chindit headquarters. The safety I sought was only twenty miles across the wilderness, where the Chindwin river lay near the Indian border.

Any day now, though, the monsoon would break and turn the Chindwin into an impassable torrent. I had to keep going.

My emaciated body began to wilt beneath the heat. My head throbbed and spun. My mouth and throat dried up until I found it difficult to swallow. Weakness and tiredness began to claim me. Merely to put one foot in front of the other demanded the greatest concentration.

But still I staggered on, driven by my resolve to reach the Chindwin. Then suddenly I found myself in a long sandy clearing. After a while, the sand became firmer and the jungle flanking it showed signs of life. Ahead I could see that the vegetation was positively luxuriant.

I stopped and listened. Above the rustling of the jungle I could hear something. It was the sound of running water.

I forced myself into a run. Soon the sand was so damp that it began to cling to the flapping soles of my boots. I rounded a thicket, then gave a gasp of joy at what lay before me. Sparkling in the sunlight was a river.

It seemed as if I would never cover the last few yards to it, but at last I flung myself down in the delicious coolness of the water.

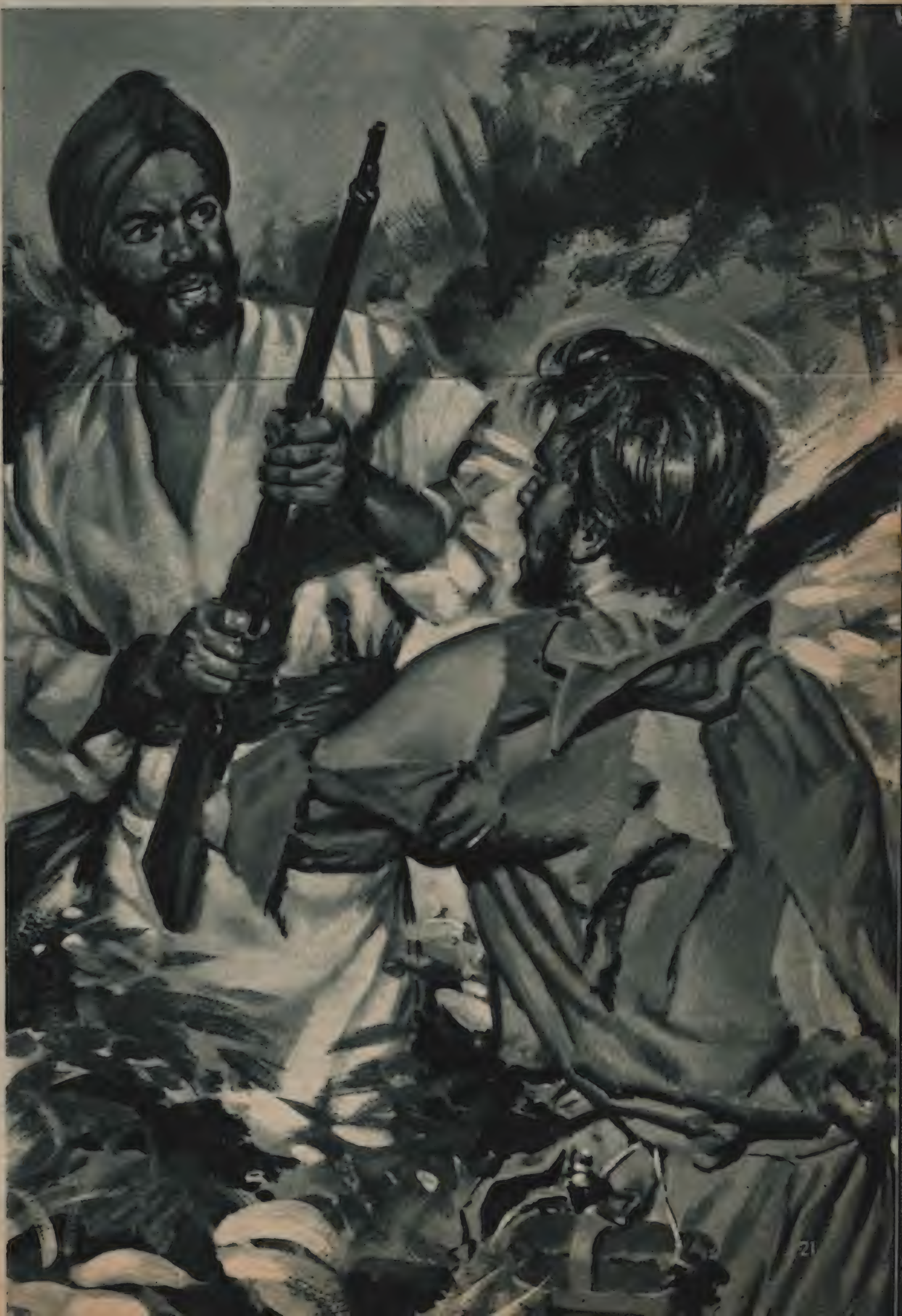
It needed all the self-discipline I could muster to resist wallowing in it. Slowly I knelt and filled my water bottle. Then, still kneeling, I took frequent sips to condition my throat, tongue and stomach.

I looked with delight at all the water flowing past me. It could be going only one way—towards the Chindwin. My route was signposted clearly. . . .

For three-quarters of a mile I waded along the river, quite unprepared for the tremendous surprise ahead. Round a bend, resting on a sandbank, was a group of about sixteen officers and men—survivors of my Chindit column.

Immediately I recognized Major George Dunlop and John Griffiths. I also saw Douggie Quayle, who had been at officers' training school with me. Dicky Clarke was there; so was John Fowler, the column's animal transport officer.

I staggered towards them eagerly. But it was a strange reunion. No rifles were raised at my



As the Sikh crept past me I seized my chance and sprang up from my hiding place. With all my strength I swung the club down at his skull

ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARDS

unexpected approach, nor did any hands fly to revolvers. An air of lethargy hung over the group. Like myself, the men were exhausted from hunger. There were only a few slow smiles as they all turned to look at me.

"Hallo, Ian," said John Griffiths. "*You* again!"

John was sitting beside a man whose prostrate form was plump compared with the leanness of his companions. I realized with a shock that the man was Sergeant Hayes. His bloated appearance was caused by illness.

"He's got beriberi," said John.

It was Sergeant Hayes who, with great courage, had helped me to lead my party of survivors after the battle to cross the Irrawaddy. The last time I had seen him was shortly before I was captured. Now, without doubt, he was dying.

The sergeant opened his eyes. As he saw me they lighted up and he grinned. "They can't kill you, can they, sir?" he said. The effort to say this had been considerable, and he dozed off again for the night.

As the sun rose, the sergeant died. Sadly I picked up his belt and holster, which still contained the revolver I had given him after the Irrawaddy battle. I buckled on the belt while Major Dunlop called us to our feet. We laid the sergeant's body in the undergrowth and moved off.

WE had not gone far when a shout from over the river startled us. At the edge of a clearing stood a Burmese waving a white flag.

"Stay here!" Major Dunlop ordered us tensely. He waded across to the Burmese, who by now had been joined by two other natives.

"We must keep absolutely still," murmured John Griffiths. "If they are enemies and we scare them they might shoot the major."

For a few minutes the major spoke with the men. Then, as he returned his lips were set in a tight, grim line.

"They belong to the Burmese traitor army," he announced, "and have given me a surrender ultimatum. There are Japs behind them. We have got three minutes in which to surrender. The alternative is death."

The despair showed clearly on every face. Safety was only a few miles away, yet we were caught in a trap.

"Every man has a right to decide for himself," the major continued, quickly and earnestly. "We have one more minute. Those who intend to stay and surrender get over there. Those who do not, *follow me!*"

As he finished speaking, he turned and made a dash to the nearest bank. Immediately bullets started to whip and whine around us.

With all my strength I made for the bank and ran into the jungle. In the confusion I was again separated from my comrades.

For hours I limped through the jungle gloom until I came to a track which led to a clearing. There, to my astonishment, lying in a state of complete exhaustion, were Major Dunlop, John Griffiths, Douggie Quayle, Dicky Clarke and at least nine others.

"Good God!" said the major. "Ian again!"

All that night we rested. Then, as the next day dawned, we made our plans. To move in one party would invite almost certain capture. The major decided that we should go in groups. I was to go with John Fowler and four British soldiers.

We said goodbye to the others and set off. I was so tired that I can recollect little of the next few miles. I remember dimly only the sensation of plunging on between thorns and grass, forcing a path through bamboo thickets and pushing aside creepers.

But suddenly we came to the Chindwin. This was the terrific moment for which I had trudged hundreds of miles. I had won the race with the monsoon. Overwhelmed by the pride of achievement, I slumped down on the bank and gazed at the great river. It was eight hundred yards wide. The muddy brown water moved sluggishly, with hardly a chuckle.

My next task was to cross it. I slipped off my tattered shirt and tied it round a bundle of dry sticks to make a floating support. On top of this I balanced my belt, revolver, water bottle and boots.

Quite forgetting the others in my eagerness, I was soon in the water.

I heard a shout. "You'll never make it, Ian," John Fowler told me. "The current will be too strong for you. Come with us to Auktaung. We should get boats there."

"No," I replied firmly. "I am going to cross now."

"But look at the river, man. It'll sweep you away."

"I am going to cross the Chindwin," I said. I was in no mood for opposition, reasoning or restraint.

"We shall try upstream," John repeated, unbuckling his pack. "Most of my chaps can't swim. Here's a present for you."

He pulled from his pack an old pair of water wings. He had saved them for an eventuality such as this—and now he was offering them to me.

"If we get boats I won't need them," he said.

I thanked him, not really appreciating how great was his sacrifice. I inflated the water wings with difficulty because I was almost too weak to blow.

Matron Agnes McGeary nursed many Chindits at Imphal. She told MacHorton: "Dinna fret, laddie. It's all over now"

Then once more I balanced my possessions on the shirt-covered sticks and waded back into the river. Before I had gone far I stopped.

"John," I said. "*You* might need this." I threw my belt and loaded revolver to him.

"Thanks," he replied. "We ran out of ammunition some time ago."

"Good luck," I called, and started to swim the river.

Out in the silent Chindwin I moved my arms in a few weak strokes and took frequent rests on the water wings. By the time I was three-quarters of the way across I had drifted almost a mile south. But the opposite bank was getting closer and closer.

Then, with two hundred yards to go, the water wings started to shrink. The heat of the jungle had perished them. In a matter of moments they collapsed.

Bobbing and gasping I clung to my sticks, and swam slowly on.

Well over a mile south of where I had started my feet touched the bottom again.

I dragged myself out on to the mud and lay there exhausted. For a long time I lay in the sun. My energy renewed by my triumph, I sat up and pulled on my boots. Then I set off on the track towards the mountains to the west. In those mountains were British patrols. And farther back there were British troops and installations. Mistakenly, I thought that my troubles were over.

I had gone only a few yards before I emerged into a wide paddy field, and set out across it. Then the smack of a bullet into my right foot synchronized with the sound of a rifle shot.

Pain from my foot surged up my leg like stabs of fire as I crashed over backwards and fell among some bushes. But, unarmed though I was, instead of being afraid I was overwhelmed with rage. My journey was over, I told myself. I had crossed the Chindwin. Theoretically, I was safe. Who had dared to try to kill me?

There came the whine of another bullet, which plunged into the undergrowth. For the first time I saw my foe. He was not a Jap. He was a Sikh—a black-bearded civilian, the tail of whose turban streamed behind him. Great would be the reward for this Indian traitor when he dragged my body back to the Japanese. Great would be his glory for shooting down a British officer, who was, moreover, an escaped prisoner.

But I was not dead yet. Ignoring the pain in my ankle, I ran through the trees until I came to a small creek.

I could run no farther, so I flung myself into the nearest bushes on the creek-bed and hid. The crashing of the Sikh grew louder. I heard the crackle of twigs and underbrush as he jumped down into the creek.

The ease with which I could see him filled me with the fear that he could see me just as easily. But he was not looking in my direction. He was looking intently at a thicket farther up the creek, his nostrils dilating with anticipation.

He paused to look for my trail. I glanced down, to look at my wounded foot, and saw that I was almost kneeling on a large piece of driftwood. I seized it with both hands. It was teak—one of the heaviest and hardest of woods.

Still looking straight ahead, one finger hooked round the trigger of his rifle, the Sikh began to creep past me. With the almost superhuman strength that welled up within me, I swiftly rose to my feet and in one murderous movement swung my club down on to his skull.

He went down without even a groan. Blood oozed from his smashed head as he fell across his rifle. I had never had to kill a man in this way before, and to me it was the most horrible of killings.

It was so loathsome that I could not bring myself to touch him to pull away his rifle. Instead, I took the curved knife from his cummerbund, pushed it into my belt and lurched off.

All that day I stumbled along, westwards from the Chindwin to where I felt I must ultimately meet friends. My thoughts centred on the Yu, the next river. If I followed its course upstream I would come to the advance British H.Q. at Tamu.

At least, I hoped that I would. Supposing, though, the Jap propaganda leaflets I had read *had* been telling the truth? What if it were true that the British had been driven out of Assam? What if Tamu were now an enemy headquarters? My anxiety passed and I slept the sleep of exhaustion. . . .

When I awoke I was weak but refreshed. My worst worry now was hunger, which threatened to make me throw aside all caution in my craving for food—any food.

That morning, near the far side of a paddy field, I came across a deserted village. I crept forward painfully on all fours, hugging the most deeply shaded side of the track in case a Jap patrol might be lying in ambush. But there was no one about, nor could I find a morsel of food. Sadly I continued my journey.

When the sun was at its highest, and the heat of the jungle almost beyond endurance, I sighted another village. This time I was too desperate to care about caution. But again I found nothing.

Overwhelmed by weakness and depression, I slumped down with my back against a fallen tree, nearly too weak and dejected to want to live.

A spark of life leaped within me at a sound of rustling from the jungle immediately opposite. I rose to my feet, the Sikh's knife in my hand. I was determined to sell my life dearly.

There emerged from the jungle a python. It was young; about ten feet long. With sinister undulations it slid between the trees and bushes.

For all my loathing of snakes I knew that I had to kill the python to live. Although it was a snake, it was food. I felt with my hand along the wall of the house beside me for something long-handled with which to make an attack. My luck was in. Among a tangle of weeds was a rusty spade.

I staggered into the open, and with one frantic slash of the spade severed the python's head from its body. It was all over very quickly. After a few slow squirms, the snake lay still.

Hastily I gathered slivers of dry bamboo and built them into a fire. I ignited them by revolving a sharpened stick in a hole in another stick. And over the fire I cooked my snake.

While I waited impatiently for the first slice to cook, I prodded it repeatedly with the point of the knife until it was tender enough to eat.

I ate it with no emotion other than the desire to satisfy my hunger—and was surprised how pleasant it tasted. It was like chicken, or perhaps veal.

The next slice tasted just as wonderful. So did the next. I cut off a third slice, thicker than the others, and when it was cooked I wrapped it in leaves. Then I left the village not only strengthened, but carrying food.

NEXT day my tracks led suddenly into a vast swamp. Everywhere was gloom, mist and fantastic shadows. No longer could I see a track or indication of where to go.

I slumped down on my knees in a wave of weakness and tried to pull myself up by clutching at a nearby tree. The bough, which had rotted, came away in my hands and splashed into a stagnant pool, the noise shattering the silence.

Completely lost I lurched onwards. Then a mud bank rose before me. I flung myself down upon it and immediately fell into a dreamless sleep. When I came to, I realized two things. First, that I was barefoot, because my boots had been sucked off by the mud; secondly, that my hunger took the form of a single desire. More than anything else, I longed for a swiss roll.

This longing will ever remain a

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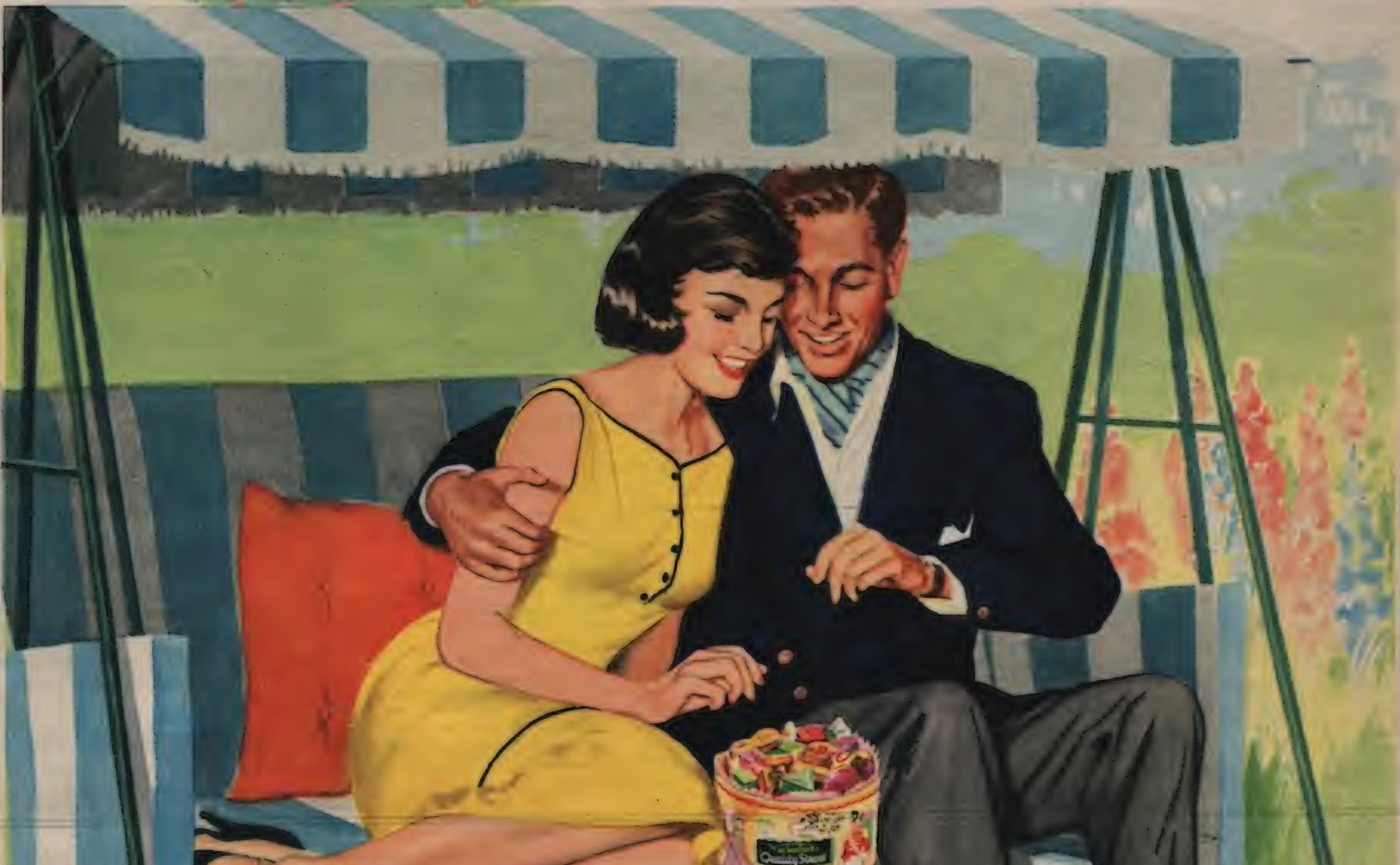
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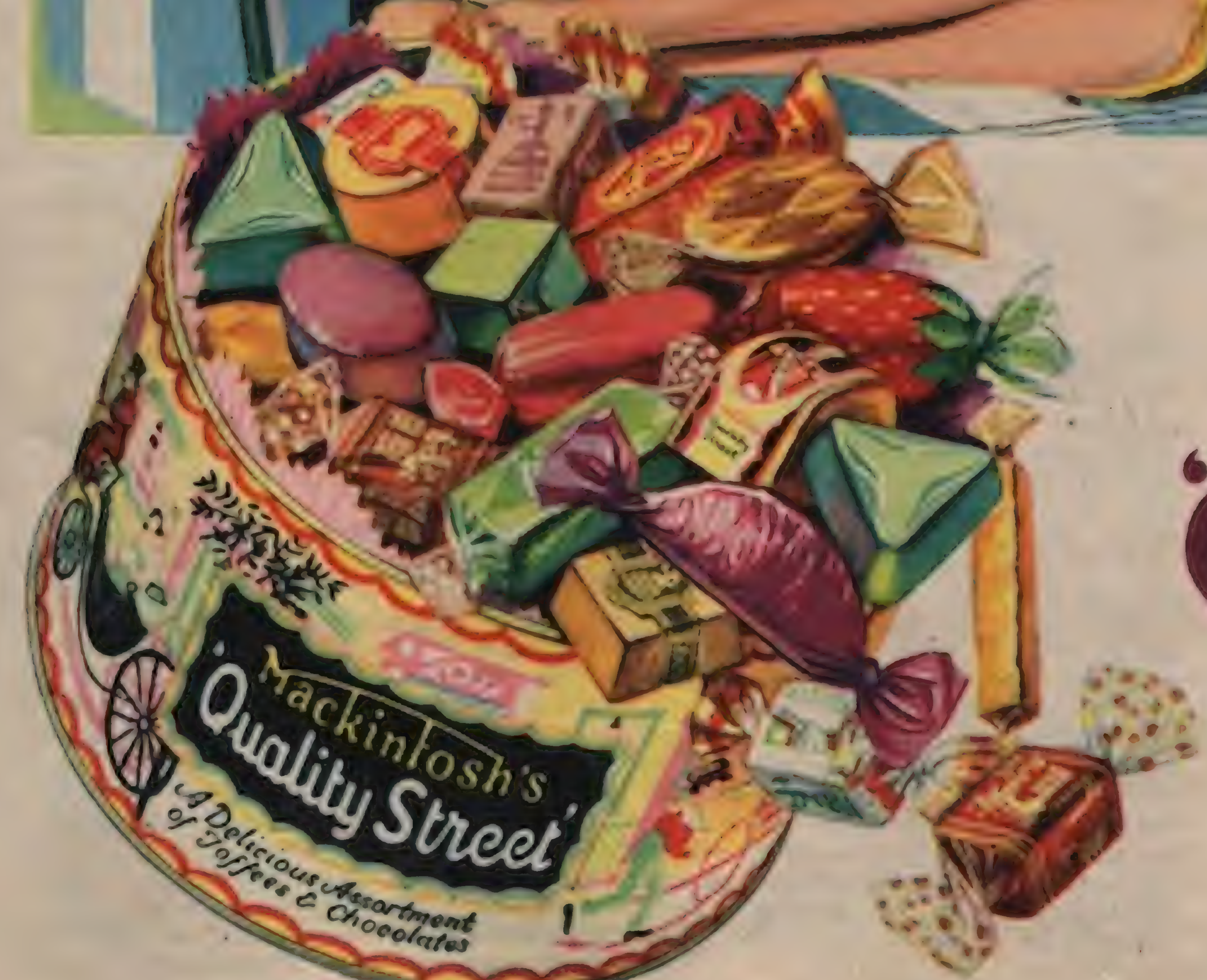
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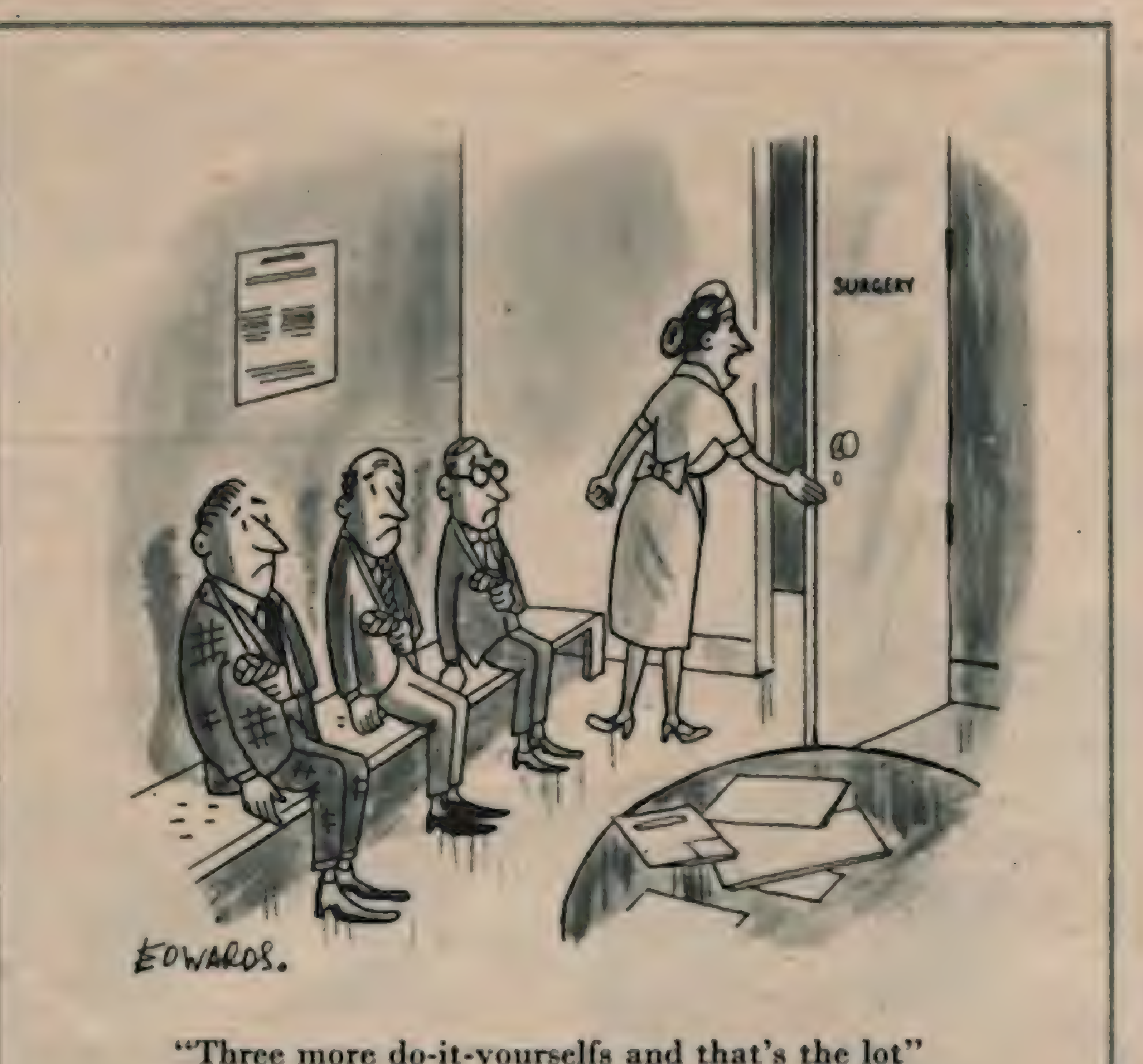

"Three more do-it-yourselfs and that's the lot"

mystery to me, for I had never particularly liked swiss rolls, nor have I liked them since. But at that moment, as I struggled to my feet, I saw rows of them dancing before my eyes.

Without moving from where I lay on the mud, I turned my eyes to the left, and my eyes riveted in amazement on a depression in the mud. I crawled over to it and stared at it unbelievingly. My fingers traced its outline. It was the imprint of a British Army boot.

As the joy of my discovery welled up within me I looked in the direction towards which the toe of the boot was pointing. Clearly discernible, stretching away before me, were more imprints.

Unquestioning, I set out to follow them. On and on they led me, across the swamp on ground which bore my weight and took me from mud bank to mud bank.

Suddenly, the mud was hardening beneath my feet. Soon I was on firm, dry earth. I was through the swamp.

I could see that the trail continued straight ahead into the jungle. This British soldier, whoever he was, could not be very far in advance of me. The print was very recent. The sun had not yet crumbled it.

Still westwards the trail led me—up hills, down into rocky ditches, on through jungle and out again across paddy fields. On and on we went, my footprint guide and I. We were content in each other's company. In my light-headedness, I chatted happily to my unknown companion.

Abruptly, at the edge of a stream, the footprints ceased. I was alone. For a few moments I stood there in bewilderment. What did I do now? Which way did I go?

Then I heard the unmistakable clamour of a large river. It was not far away. I had reached the Yu.

My pleasure was short-lived. On the opposite bank I saw the flash of sunlight on steel bayonets. Then men in green uniforms and soft-peaked caps detached themselves from the jungle and splashed down into the shallows with rifles at the ready.

Green uniforms and soft-peaked caps! So the enemy propaganda had been true. The Japs *had* advanced beyond the Chindwin.

At long last, all my will to win drained from me. I had crossed the Chindwin. I had done everything I could to achieve success. Yet here, on the banks of the Yu, was the end. There was no point in going on.

I stood up to my full height, raised my hands and stared weakly at the men who would be my captors. One of them brought his rifle to the aim. Any second now, I thought, I would see a flash, and then I would die.

But there was no flash. I did not see what happened next. I collapsed on the sand unconscious.

It was quite dark when I opened my eyes again. Armed soldiers were sitting around a fire in the clearing in which I lay.

"Oh, so you've come round then." The English voice shocked me. I turned to see a young British officer in a dark green shirt.

"You gave us quite a start, you know, rising up like that," he said. "If you hadn't looked like the wild man of the woods we might have taken you for a Jap and shot you."

So it had been a British patrol. Suddenly I was laughing uncontrollably. As my laughter increased it was cut short by a slap with an open palm.

"Drink this char, then you'll be all right," said the officer, kneeling beside me with a steaming tin mug in his hands. He explained that the green uniforms were a new issue to the British Army in Burma since the Chindits had set out.

I drank the tea eagerly. Then I slept the most glorious sleep of my life. . . .

A day or so later I sat with the driver in an ambulance bound for Imphal. "What's the date?" I asked.

"The sixteenth of May, sir," he replied. A hundred days had passed since I had last seen Imphal.

As we sped along the monsoon burst upon us. The rain was drumming loudly on the roof of the ambulance when we drew up before a signboard: "Number 19 Casualty Clearing Station."

"This is it. You get off here, sir," said the driver.

Obediently I allowed myself to be helped down.

"Come away in, this is the officers' ward." A feminine voice with a Scottish inflection made me turn sharply. I expected to see my mother, for it seemed to be her voice which had spoken.

"You look startled," said a small, smiling matron in khaki and red who stood before me. She touched my arm. "Dinna fret yourself, laddie. It's all over now."

I was quickly put to bed in the hospital, which was almost deserted, and the matron, Agnes McGeary, came to my bedside. "Is there anything you would like?" she asked.

"Yes, please," I answered. "A swiss roll."

She smiled understandingly and went out. The next morning, when I awoke, a swiss roll lay on my bedside locker. One slice satisfied my shrunken stomach. Then the craving passed.

Nursed back to health in the hospital, I became fit enough to be discharged. I travelled by truck to Dimapur, and went from there by train to the depot of the 2nd Gurkhas at Dehra Dun.

The monsoon rains were still lashing down as a truck collected me from the station at Dehra Dun and pulled up outside a marquee which was the unit's reception office. Orders had been given that survivors of the third battalion, to which I belonged, had to report there before going on six weeks' leave.

"You'll get your railway warrants here," shouted the officer who had accompanied me in the truck.

"Thanks!" I shouted back, and carefully lowered myself over the tailboard. I squelched through the mud to the marquee.

Inside the marquee, a booted and spurred young major behind the table snapped: "Name, rank and number."

I told him. He did not even look up. He was very much the regimental officer. "You will proceed on leave within the next day or so. You were wounded, weren't you?"

"Yes," I replied. He looked up, his cold blue eyes fixed on mine.

"Sorry," I said. "Yes, *sir!*"

"You will be notified of your disposal while you are on leave."

I screwed up my courage. "I . . . I wonder if I might look at your list of survivors, sir?"

"Over there on the table."

I crossed to the table he had indicated and eagerly thumbed through the typewritten pages labelled: "Nominal Roll—3/2 G.R.: Gurkha Other Ranks." Was Kulbahadur, my brave Gurkha orderly, whom I had last seen before the battle to cross the Irrawaddy, still alive?

I reached the "Ks" and I found: "Rifleman Kulbahadur Thapa 48."

I SEARCHED my memory for Kulbahadur's army number. Kulbahadur Thapa was a common Gurkha name, and only those last two digits would really identify him. But it was useless. I could not remember. I turned away disappointed.

"Are you looking for me, sahib?" said a soft voice. I spun round. Kulbahadur stood just inside the tent, the rain streaming from his hat and ground sheet. His face was one wide smile. "I heard you were arriving today, sahib," he said.

We shook hands in a long firm grip.

"This tent is overcrowded," shouted the major in Gurkhali. "Clear it!"

Kulbahadur touched my arm and grinned. "Sahib," he said, "we are soldiers again now."

Side by side we went out into the rain, our laughter lost in a peal of thunder as the monsoon rose to a new height of fury. THE END

Ian MacHorton's story will be published in book form by Odhams early next year

The forbidden range

Continued from page 19

been with the tall man the day before.

One of them was looking at the stuff on the ground. "You don't follow orders very good, do you, sodbuster?" he asked Pa. "You was told not to let that plough touch the ground in this section."

Pa looked at the plough and grinned. "Busted a wheel," he told them. "We had to unload some of the stuff to lighten the load so me and the missus and the boys could raise the axle, me with this arm. We'll be hittin' the road in the mornin'."

The rider turned to the other man, a big, mean-looking cuss with little pig eyes.

"Ain't that a good one, Harvey?" he said. "They're about to hit the trail again in the mornin'. Didn't you hear Ed Sparks tell this nester not to let that sod-cutter touch the ground before they got to Long Valley?"

Harvey nodded. "I heard him, all right," he said. "What do you think we'd ought to do about it? Ed's a kind man, but he don't like it when folks start puttin' plough to the ground in this territory."

"Ed Sparks! Ed Sparks!" Ma fumed. "What have you people done—made a god of this Ed Sparks?"

The one who had talked first took off his hat with an exaggerated sweep and bowed in his saddle, which made Ma's lips tighten even more. "You might say the next thing to it, lady. He happens to be top man, and what he says goes. He has the most cattle and the biggest saloon, the most riders and guns back of him, and the idea in his head that nesters ain't never goin' to get a foothold in this part of the country."

Then his voice got harder. "You had your orders, nester, and if you think Ed Sparks gives orders just to hear his teeth rattle, that's too bad for you. You had your chance and you wouldn't take it. . . . Harvey!"

The one named Harvey spurred his horse up close to Pa. "You and your missus walk ahead of us over to them oxen, and walk light."

Pa stood right where he was. "What do you men aim to do?" he asked quietly. "If you try to hurt that stock, I intend to jump you. You better start on me."

Ma took his arm. "Don't, Dave," she said, and I saw Pa casting a longing glance over to where the shotgun lay, inside the canvas shelter. "Can't you see that these gentlemen are only looking for an excuse to use their guns? Oxen or people, it makes no difference to them. . . . Oliver, go and get the other children."

Right then I knew that my father was the bravest man on earth. But for Ma dragging him away, he was ready to tackle both of them, broken arm and all. Knowing it was hopeless, he stiffened like a stone, and his eyes had an expression I hope never to see again.

They killed all four of the oxen and the two milk cows, leaving only the calf, and the two bony old horses Pa and I rode. Pa flinched the tiniest bit with every shot, as though the bullets were driving into him instead of the stock. Ma stood there with little Ab in her arms and she never took her eyes off the two men.

When they had finished, Ma stepped out in front of their horses.

"Now that you have done your proud day's work," she said, "go. Go and tell your god, Ed Sparks, that you have done his bidding, that he need no longer worry for fear the Bascom family will dispossess him of his empire. Tell him you left behind you a ruined man, a bitter woman and the broken hearts of children. Your god will be proud of you. May mine forgive you."

And Ma didn't leave it at that, either. Next day she took action. At the noon meal, she said to me: "Oliver, as soon as you're finished eating, I want you to go and saddle Prince."

Pa started to say something, but she beat him to it. "Dave, have I ever asked you to do a wrong thing?" He had to shake his head at that.

"Then listen to me," she said. "Those two men went back up the road in the direction we were going, and they were travelling light. We know they were not going far."

Pa looked worried and his voice was low and growly. "Nellie Bascom, what are you thinkin' of?"

"I'm thinking that somewhere not too far down that road there is a man named Ed Sparks. I am going down that road until I find him and, when I do, he is going to pay for our oxen and cows."

Pa stared at her as if he thought she'd gone crazy. "You're going to what?" he bellowed. "A woman bracin' a bunch of cut-throats like them? What kind of a man do you think I am? That's a man's job, and if I ain't man enough to——"

"That's just what they expect," Ma interrupted, handing him his mug of chicory coffee. "Don't you see, Dave, that you can't go? What would I do with five boys to raise myself, if anything happened to you? How long could one man, even without a bad arm, stand up to them on their own ground?"

Pa bellowed and grumbled some more, but Ma turned to me. "Oliver, you get the horse ready. Put the blanket pad on behind the saddle, too. You are going with me, so you can——" I realized she meant so I could bring back the horse, if anything happened to her. I began to wonder then if they'd shoot ten-year-old boys, too.

I wasn't feeling very big, getting ready to ride in on a bunch of roughnecks like that, but I did as Ma said, and rode Prince back to the wagon. Ma handed me a long package done up in canvas and got up behind me on the blanket pad, sitting sideways.

She leaned down and kissed Pa. "Take care of the boys, Dave," she said. "We'll be all right. . . ."

That was the most miserable ride I ever took. It was hot as the hubs of Hades, and I was sick inside all the way, thinking of what might happen. For all I knew, we were riding straight to our deaths.

We stopped at a creek to eat and to give Prince a chance to rest and graze awhile. Then we went on, and it wasn't more than about five miles when we saw the cluster of buildings down the road.

It wasn't actually a town, but more like a big estate, with only one building facing the road. The others were barns, storehouses and a big, rambling two-storey house set well back on a little knoll in a grove of trees.

On both sides of the road were cattle pens, and there must have been five hundred head of fine-looking cattle milling around in them. I knew Ma was thinking of the four poor oxen these cattle-rich people had deprived us of, and of the two milk cows.

Coming closer, we saw on the one building fronting on the road the sign: DROVER'S REST, ED SPARKS, PROP. It was a long, low, one-storey structure with a lot of ornate decorations on the outside, and I knew this was probably what the rider had described as Ed Sparks's biggest saloon in the section. Several horses were tied to the hitch rail and everybody seemed to be inside out of the heat.

Ma told me to stop Prince at the corner of the building. We got off and she unwrapped the long package, and then was the first time I knew what it was. The sight of our old shotgun in Ma's hands scared me more than ever.

She took two shells from her coat pocket and slipped them into the double barrels. Then Ma and I went in through the swinging doors together.

The man back of the bar saw us first. His handlebar moustache went up against his nose and his eyes popped out as if he couldn't believe what he saw.

When we got inside, Ma moved sideways till we were up against a blank wall, and put her back to it.

"Where is Ed Sparks?" she asked, and her voice seemed to cut through the noise and hit every ear at once. The bar was lined with men, and they swivelled round as if they were all pulled with the same string. Every eye was riveted on the shotgun, which looked like a cannon in Ma's small hands.

"I asked a question and I want an answer," Ma said sharply. "Where is Ed Sparks?"

"Why—uh—ma'am," the bartender spluttered, "I reckon he must be on up at the house. Leastways, he ain't——"

"Get him," Ma snapped. "The rest of you men stay where you are and drop those guns. If any man

MODESTY—I

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[NCC 160B]

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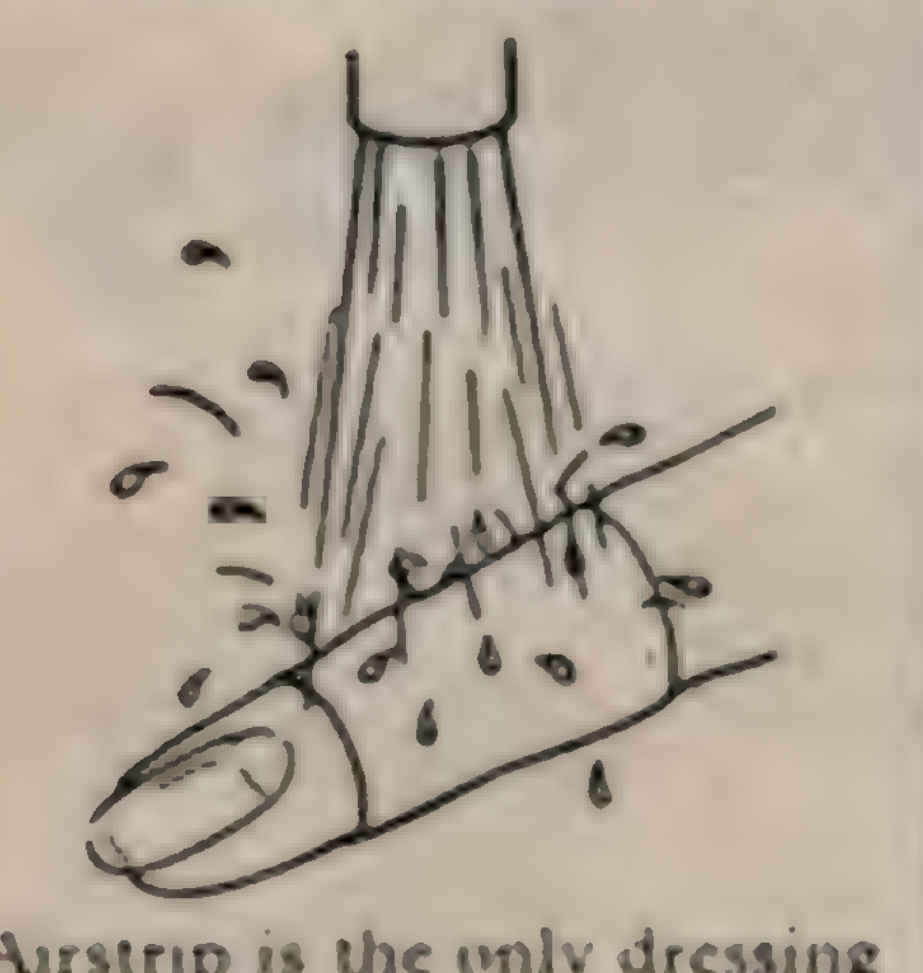
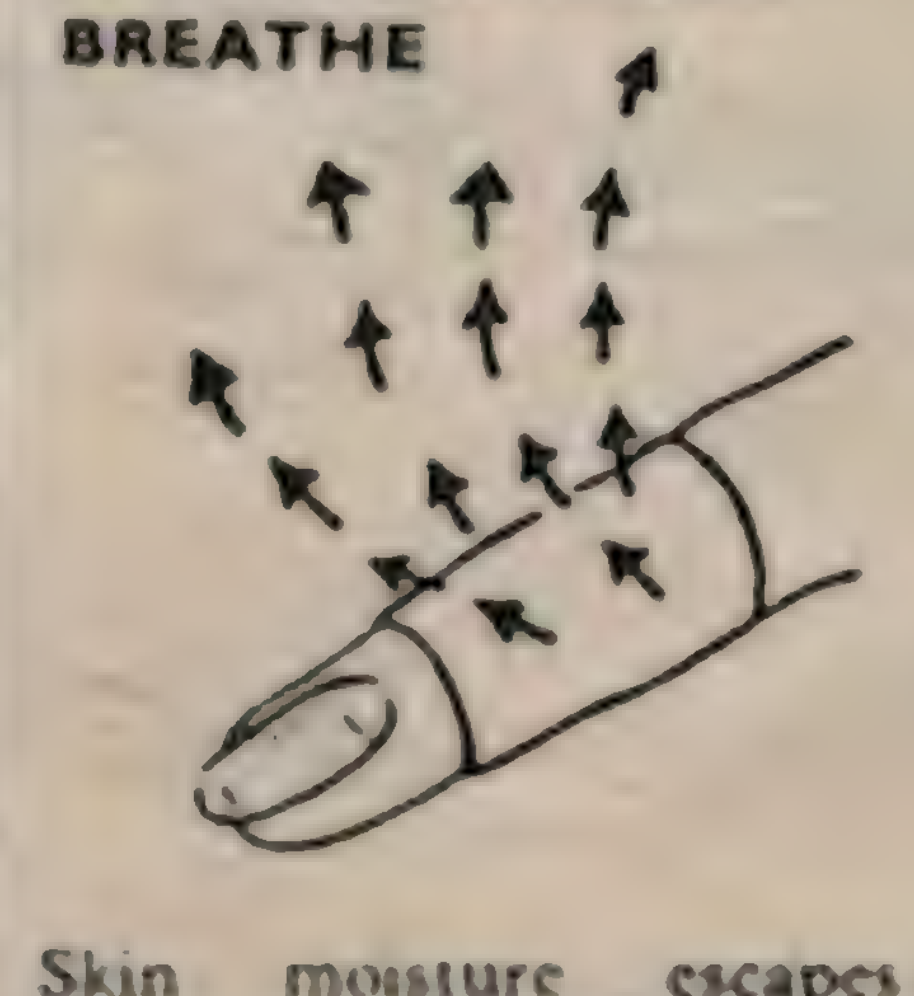


Airstrip is the only dressing that lets wounds breathe and keeps out all water, grease and dirt.

IT LETS WOUNDS BREATHE



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comes within ten feet of me or my son, I'll blow him to kingdom come."

The way she said it scared even me. I sneaked a sideways look at her and her eyes were fairly shooting fire. The excitement had brought extra colour to her cheeks and she was prettier than ever, as she stood there and defied the whole territory of Kansas.

One by one the men unbuckled their gun belts and dropped them to the floor. The bartender went out of the back door in a hurry.

During the three or four minutes he was gone nobody spoke a word. When Ed Sparks came in the door, not a head was turned to greet him.

Sparks was even more dressed up this time. He had on a fancy-cut coat of a deep wine colour and tight-fitting, fawn-coloured trousers, with a small expanse of white shirt showing above the high-buttoned coat. He was smoking a long, thin cigar, and I remember how handsome his dark face was against the white of the shirt. He took the cigar from his mouth and walked towards us.

MA didn't raise the gun any higher. She just said: "That's close enough, Mr. Sparks." She said it quietly, but Ed Sparks set both feet on the floor and didn't move.

"You remember me," Ma said in the same quiet tone. "I'm Mrs. Dave Bascom. You owe my husband and my children and me for four oxen and two milk cows. I am here to collect."

Ed Sparks looked thoughtful as he waited for Ma to go on.

"Your two brave men did their job well, Mr. Sparks. They shot down those poor beasts right in front of our eyes just to satisfy their lust for cruelty. Now you can either pay for our losses or stand here and watch me shoot this saloon to pieces around your ears. I have no doubt the big mirror back of the bar is quite expensive, and this chandelier must have cost as much as all our animals put together."

"It did," murmured Ed Sparks.

Ma's voice trembled then a little for the first time. "It cost you money, but not the love of your heart. When it drops and shatters, will you fall on your face and cry your heart out as my children did when the oxen and cows they loved were murdered—yes, murdered—before their eyes?"

There was a dead silence. Ed Sparks puffed at his cigar and found that it had gone out. His face darkened. He turned to one of the men at the bar.

"Get me Harvey and Keene." His voice cracked like a whip. "They're over at the cattle pens. Put a gun on them if you have to, but bring them."

He turned to Ma, and suddenly the hardness had gone from his face. "Mrs. Bascom, you won't need your gun. Whatever those men did, they did without my orders or knowledge, and if there's a price, they'll pay it. May I?"

Ma blinked just a little as Ed Sparks reached out gently and took the shotgun from her hands. He broke the action and looked at the two shells in it, and then his face went bleak as a snowdrift as the doors swung open and Harvey and Keene came in, their faces sullen and worried. Sparks snapped the action of the gun shut again and faced them, the muzzle pointing at their feet.

"You were paid yesterday," he told them softly. He motioned to a spot on the floor a couple of feet in front of them. "Put it there."

The two men looked at each other, then at Ma and me. "Aw, Ed, we was just havin' a little fun," Harvey spoke up. "Anyway, you wanted to keep these nesters out of here, didn't you?" His voice broke off suddenly as the shotgun came up and levelled at his stomach.

"Talk once more about fun and I'll spatter you all over that wall," Ed Sparks ground out. "When you came riding in here looking for work, I told you there would be no rough stuff, and I meant what I said. You took it on yourselves to impoverish a family, now impoverish yourselves. Down to the last penny! Move!"

Under the urging of the shotgun, the two men stripped their pockets of every bit of money they could scrape out. It made a pretty respectable heap on the floor and, when it was all there, Sparks motioned them back and pointed.

"That is the price of their entertainment, Mrs. Bascom," he said. "It's yours." He turned to the two men, and they cringed before him.

"Ride out," he said with a razor edge to his voice, "and don't come back unless you're looking for a different kind of fun." They slunk out in a hurry and we heard them ride away in the opposite direction from our camp.

Ed Sparks turned to Ma, who was now crying openly, her small hands up over her face, and he put a snowy-white handkerchief under her fingers.

"You could say that only a fool hires fools," he said. "Harvey and Keene acted without my orders, but they were in my hire and the responsibility is mine. You'll lose nothing, Mrs. Bascom."

"But why did they. . . ?" Ma stopped and sniffed. "We thought you hated us."

Ed Sparks shook his head, and the look of tiredness was back on his face. "My talk to you outside Middletown was not meant to frighten you on my own account. I was pressing you to go on to Long Valley without being tempted to stop anywhere else along the way, where some of the other cattlemen hire men like Harvey and Keene as an everyday thing."

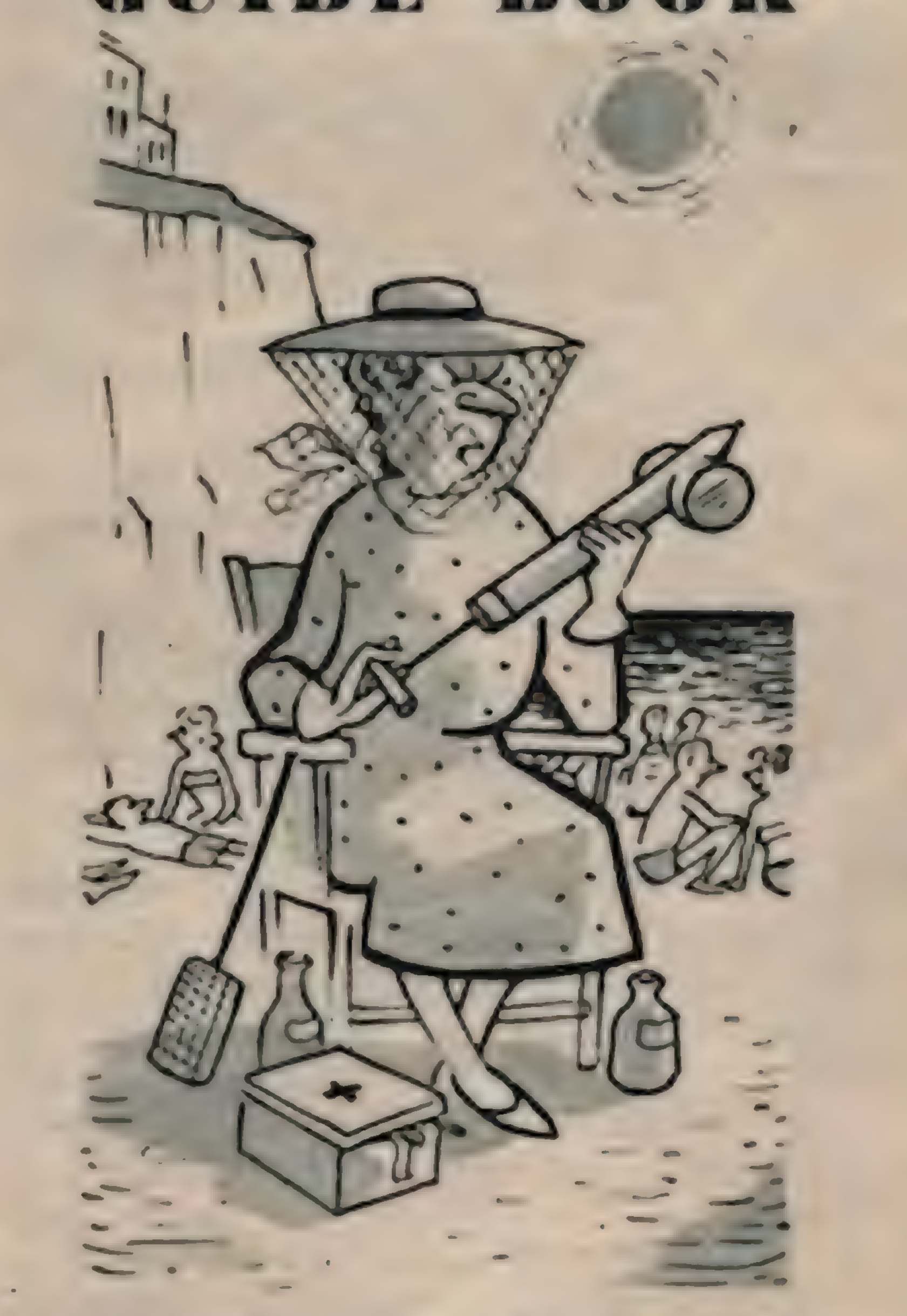
He turned to me. "Son, ride back and tell your father that my men will bring oxen and cows to your camp tomorrow to take the place of those you lost."

Then I saw a little twinkle come into his dark eyes. "You might tell him, too, that two of my men will ride with you to Long Valley, so you won't have any more trouble. I don't want to look down the end of that shotgun again, if your mother decides to hold me responsible for anything else. . . . Mrs. Bascom, if you'll come up to the house, we'll see about something for you to eat or drink before you. . . ."

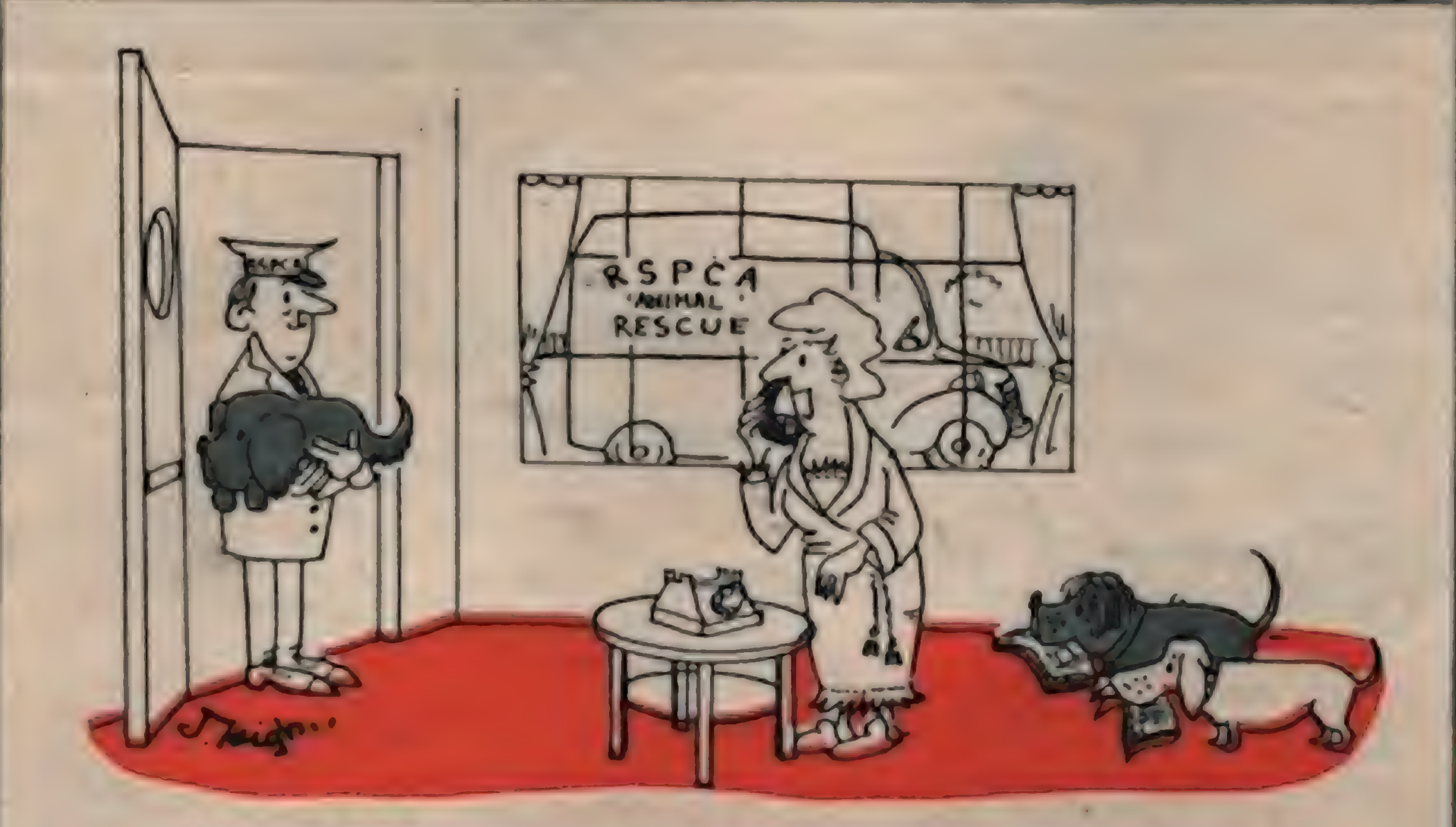
But that was all I heard. I was already heading out of the door to ride and tell Pa. As I said, I'd started to grow up.

THE END

LEAVES FROM Starke's HOLIDAY GUIDE BOOK



"Although much is being done to mitigate nuisance from insects, prudent travellers will still take simple remedies to protect themselves from those persisting"



"I would like to increase my morning papers to three"

Hordes of squabbling neighbours

Continued from page 20

remain together through the winter—at any rate, I have never seen personal attachments in winter flocks. But, as the breeding season approaches, a bird may find and recognize its mate in the general area in which the colony nests. They seem to pair for life.

The young birds, still with mottled wings and tails, are never paired when they arrive at the colony. In the formation of new pairs the females often take the initiative, and I have seen a hen approaching a male with her head pulled in and her whole body flattened and made horizontal to the ground. Then she walked slowly round the male and persuaded him to follow her to a spot where, aided by her, he began to carry out nest-building movements. This action may be accompanied by strange head-jerkings and a deep rhythmic call, *hoo-o, hoo-o, hoo-o*.

In one courtship display which I have seen the female assumes a more or less horizontal position and moves her head up and down, while the male regurgitates food and sometimes feeds her. He does not always feed her, for it is a ritual ceremony, and the female may have eaten more recently than he.

Once a pair selects its ledge on the cliff face, that place becomes more or less its "territory," and thereafter the pair spends a great deal of time there.

In spring I have seen occupiers of territories having "arguments" with their neighbours. If another bird tried to invade the territory, the male walked stiffly towards him and, at this show of threat, the invader usually took off. Excitement reached a peak when late arrivals tried to muscle in and set up their own territories on the boundaries of existing ones. Male gulls then adopted the stiff threat posture and moved slowly towards each other. When they were close, one bent down and began to pull up clumps of thrift or grass and stood with one of them in his bill. The other made forward lunges at it, and sometimes a tug-of-war ensued.

A great deal of threat display among birds is made up of this rather formal sparring, but fights do sometimes take place. I remember seeing one in which a particularly aggressive male seized a rival by the bill and marched him up and down for several minutes, finally releasing him and pecking him about the head and neck.

Eventually the gulls begin to search for an actual site for the nest, and they may produce several trial "scrapes" in the course of the first few days, spending more and more time at a particular one which seems to give satisfaction.

I have watched the nests being built. One bird sitting in the scrape draws up tufts of grass and thrift and sheep's wool towards itself and then begins to twist and turn in all directions, tucking the material around its flanks. The brushing and shaping given by the softly rounded breast soon produces a safe and comfortable nest.

When the first of the brown-blotched olive eggs has been laid, the nest is under constant guard. If, in the early days, the eggs are not being brooded, one of the pair is almost invariably standing a few feet from the nest.

Protection is now of supreme importance, for the eggs may be stolen, not only by one of the black-backed gulls but even by other herring gulls who will eat them. In the normal way, herring gulls will take the eggs of birds which nest in the open, such as lapwing, ringed plover, guillemot and cormorant, but they will undoubtedly also turn on the eggs of other herring gulls. I once saw a herring gull nip in and attack an egg while the owner allowed its attention to be diverted for a moment by a nearby fight.

By June, numbers of speckled greyish chicks are sitting or standing by their nests in the gulleries, often in the shadow of their parents. The colony is much quieter than earlier in the season. In one territory, a chick may be asleep, while next door a youngster is busy pecking at its parent's bill until the adult suddenly stretches up its neck and disgorges a large lump of partially digested food. These remains of fish or crab are then fed to the chick.

On the narrow ledges of some steep cliffs, the chicks may have to remain at the nest until they are able to fly, which is after about five weeks. They grow quickly and begin to exercise their wings as the time for the first flight approaches. When they are ready, they leave the colony and are soon self-supporting. Between late July and mid-August the colony becomes more and more deserted, and the number of gulls on quaysides and in harbours grows enormously.

Besides fish, herring gulls eat shellfish, such as mussels or clams, in great numbers, and the gulls often carry them up into the air and drop them from a height so that the shells break. This behaviour does not seem to be instinctive, but to have been adopted by a few individuals who were, in turn, copied by less skilful imitators. There is a record of a herring gull apparently playing with an object in the air. The bird was seen to drop the object, allow it to fall about ten feet and then swoop to retrieve it. This was done three times before the gull finally allowed the object to drop for the last time.

Carrion and shore refuse are also eaten. One of the best places I know at which to watch gulls is at the waste outlet of a fish canning factory at Peterhead in north-east Scotland. Here I have seen seven species of gull at the same time, including a rare Continental visitor—the little gull.

On a morning late in August, I was watching this squabbling, noisy mass of birds when I suddenly spotted a dark, sooty bird with long, angled wings and projecting central tail feathers, turning and twisting in the sky in pursuit of a herring gull. It was an Arctic skua, a southward-moving bird of passage. However hard the gull tried to elude its attacker, the skua followed perfectly, until the hard-pressed victim was forced to disgorge his titbit.

It seemed only poetic justice that the successful, overbearing, predatory herring gull had, on one occasion at least, been outwitted and outflown. THE END

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Eye of the master

Continued from page 8

through the hedges of high hazel up to Mile End Farm. . . .

It was a week later when Mr. Jehu, the farmer, took his old ploughman into the market town to see the consulting oculist who came, once a month, to the clinic at the Cottage Hospital. That week Edward had touched a gatepost with the tractor.

That was public display; but also, up in his own bedroom, Edward had confirmed to himself that his sight was not good in his left eye. He had up there a dartboard and, each night after he had said his prayers, the old man did a quarter of an hour's practice throwing. He had done it for years as a sort of reassurance to himself of his skill. But this last week he had failed on certain numbers.

It did not worry him. But, in the cold evenings, he did not go down to The Golden Eagle for fear that they would ask him to play, or talk about the failure of the other night. Instead he sat in his little room, thinking about his half-forgotten victories.

On the second night Mrs. Jehu heard him, and made him come down to the lounge to watch TV. He tried to make an excuse about his eye, but she said that he could listen to the sound, and got her husband to take Edward to see the doctor in the village; and it was the doctor who made the appointment to see the eye specialist.

As he sat, with Mr. Jehu, waiting in the out-patients' room at the hospital, Edward was not afraid. Perhaps they could make his eye well and give him the old magic in his vision. He knew that he needed the full truth in both eyes before he could flight a dart to its home. If there was only to be one left for him, he would have to start all over again, or play no more.

Mr. Jehu, homely and reassuring in his brown tweed suit and brown boots, went in with old Edward. The specialist was quite young. The old ploughman expected to find a man as old as himself, for he had thought a man had to be old to be an expert.

But somehow it reassured him that the doctor didn't have a white coat on, and that the nurse near at hand was helping and kind and called him Mr. Thomas. He hadn't been called that for thirty years.

There had to be drops in his eye.

"They'll sting," said the specialist. "But I'll hold your hand, and Mr. Jehu, your friend, will hold the other, and Sister will drop in the medicine. If you were a young man Mr. Thomas, I'd say that Sister was dropping in kisses."

It was a poor joke, but they all laughed.

The specialist looked into the beyond of that eye of Edward's which had become dim. For a while he looked, making small notes on a sheet of paper, and filling in columns, and once humming to himself.

Then the doctor straightened up and the nurse filled the washbasin in the corner ready for him to wash his hands. Mr. Jehu, the farmer who knew the mysterious movement of crops and winds and rains, but who knew little of the ways of medicine, looked anxiously at the specialist.

And old Edward, who was famous as a darts player but was equal in illness with all men, looked at a tall poplar tree which stood in the hospital grounds and which gave to his country mind all the faith it needed.

The doctor spoke, rather carefully: "Mr. Thomas, you've got a fast-growing cataract on that eye. Do you rely much on your eyes? I see that your occupation is a ploughman. You can plough a straight furrow, I daresay, with that remaining good eye."

"I am a ploughman," said Edward.

"He is my ploughman," said Mr. Jehu. "The best with a tractor in the kingdom."

"Two eyes, anyway, are better than one," went on the specialist, "and there's always a danger that a second cataract might come on the other eye. So I think we'd better take away that one on your left eye, Mr. Thomas, quite soon."

"What if I left it a while?" asked the old ploughman. He had never been in a hospital before. His mother had had an operation before she died, but that had been something deep inside her. This was different.

"It might pass to your other eye, as I said," the doctor answered. "If you have this one taken off, your sight will be like it used to be."

"And I'll play darts like I used to?"

The specialist laughed. "Darts is like shooting, isn't it? You need both eyes. If you played golf or fished, you'd get by on one eye. So we'll take the curtain off, shall we?"

Edward nodded, calmly. Perhaps only his master knew the hope which shone now in the heart of this old man who wanted to play darts to the end. . . .

In a fortnight the operation was arranged. It was all like some dream, forced on old Edward not by sleep, but by the necessity that he must play darts again; that he must redeem himself before all men. With the old focus to his eyes again, he would be able to play for a few weeks and then retire.

The ten days in the hospital were the strangest and most improbable that the old countryman had ever known. For many years he had never slept away from the attic bedroom at Mile End Farm. From that small corner window he watched the seasons and the festivals, and he had grown old in the familiar security of that room. Now they put him in a long ward, and the only privacy was his own silence.

He had never been driven into himself before, for on the tractor or playing darts he could be utterly carefree. Now, however, he put a shell about his private self, and illumined his inner thoughts with the vision of playing darts again, he the champion who had come back. And each night he said his prayers, and spent a quarter of an hour in playing darts in his imagination.

On the morning of the operation they were especially kind to him. But one question only did he ask the Sister of the Ward.

"Will they put me to sleep?" The sister was young, with a brown mole below her lip which accentuated her ready smile. And the old ploughman, looking at the soft contours of her cheeks as she smiled down, thought of her as an angel, with her white frilly cap and her long-fingered hands with white half-moons on the clean, trim nails.

She smiled at the old man.

"No, Mr. Thomas, you'll have drops in your eyes, and a little injection to make you a bit drowsy. But you won't sleep, because the surgeon will be talking to you and will want you to co-operate with him."

He had the drops and the injection, and soon afterwards they took him into the theatre on a trolley; one wheel squeaked just a little and he wondered, in his drowsiness, why they did not put a little oil on it.

Soon he was lying on his back, staring up at the strange, green-clothed figure of the surgeon; at the circle of lamps on the ceiling; at the hands which laid a green lawn of cloth over his face, leaving only an aperture for his eye. Then they started work on his cataract, holding back the eyelids and giving another injection into his eye itself.

His hearing had suddenly become very acute. He could hear every sound; the distant playing of a wireless; crockery being washed up; the breathing of the surgeon and the theatre staff. Sometimes the surgeon spoke to him, gently, and Edward obeyed with movements of his eyeball.

Once the surgeon asked him, as if they were talking on top of a haystack: "Is your tractor a good starter on frosty mornings?"

Edward wanted to explain what a good starter she was, but there was a knack in swinging the handle. But all he could answer was a muffled grunt.

Again, when he was doing some snip-snipping with a tiny scissors about the surface of the eye, the surgeon remarked: "You'll get a bull every other throw when we've finished, Edward."

The old man tried to say that he could get a string of successive bulls if needs be, but the hands of the Theatre Sister were holding the sides of his face, so that he was immobilized.

MODESTY—2

Modesty is useless to a man who is in want.

Latin Proverb

Then the surgeon moved a pair of forceps and there was a pulling feeling, the sensation deadened by the local anaesthetic.

"Good," said the surgeon. "Well done, Edward."

Now that it was over, the old man expected that he could sit up and see once more and that he could go home to his old ways. But they bandaged his eye most carefully and took him back to the ward on the trolley. There they gave him a tablet and another injection, so that he fell into a dark and quiet dreamless sleep.

In a few days Edward was fetched back to the farm by Mr. Jehu. They had nothing much to say to each other. But at the bottom of the long lane which led up to the farm, Edward pointed from the car and said: "Even while I close my right eye, Mister Jehu, I can see the little snowdrops beyond the nut-trees."

That was a sign to them both that, on this February morning after the great event of his life, the bad eye of Edward Thomas was good again.

Up at the farmhouse Mrs. Jehu had made a special dinner for them. There was a chicken, and all the trimmings, and after that was apple-crunch and cream, and great mugs of sweet coffee.

Then Mrs. Jehu said: "And tonight I'll have to be busy cooking again."

Mr. Jehu smiled, as if he knew why. Old Edward asked, puzzled: "Somebody coming over for supper?"

Mrs. Jehu, a tiny energetic woman with white hair, who cooked as easily as other women talked, answered: "Yes, I've asked them all up from the village, all the men who play darts. Pryce Morgan and his wife are coming too, and they're getting the girl to keep open The Golden Eagle. There's not a soul will be there, but the law must be kept."

"All them what play darts?" asked Edward.

"So that you can prove what a good operation you had, Edward," replied Mrs. Jehu.

The three of them laughed. And then Edward went up to his room and his dartboard to practise.

At eight o'clock the great kitchen of Mile End Farm was full of neighbours and friends. Some darts players had brought their wives, and others their girl friends. There were young men with Tony Curtis haircuts, mingling with bald farm workers; and farmers' wives in their best suits talking with girls from the village wearing long earrings and the neckbands of Edwardian times.

And there was Pryce Morgan, darts master of the inn. His wife had brought with them the great glass case with the stuffed golden eagle inside. There was loud laughter as the landlord's wife handed the case across to Mrs. Jehu. "Just for tonight, that's all," Pryce Morgan said.

There was eating and drinking and then a dartboard was set up and lots were drawn for teams. The case of the golden eagle was hung from a hook just above the dartboard. They made Edward captain of one team and Pryce Morgan captain of the other. Mr. Jehu, who had never done such a thing in his life, kept the score as instructed with chalk on the back of a tea tray.

And, clear for all to see, Edward was master of the game once more; his eye, which had gone dim, was now bright and clear and in harmony with its twin. His team was handicapped, but it won. And the great golden eagle, secure and untouched and unharmed, looked down on the darts champion who was come again to victory.

After the match there was dancing and singing, and then eating and more eating. And when it was all over, and all the friends and neighbours had all gone, and the eagle had been taken back to the inn in the village, old Edward put his darts back in their leather case.

"It'll be the tractor again tomorrow," he said to Mr. and Mrs. Jehu as they stood before the dying fire. His master and mistress smiled at the old ploughman.

One of the last winds of winter echoed in the heights of the old chimney, sucking a slight spark upwards. Mr. Jehu waited for the echo to cease, and then he said: "Any job will be simple after tonight."

Edward wanted to say that his triumph was shared with them too, but he knew that they understood.

Anyway, tomorrow's furrows would be as straight and as true as the first warm wind of spring. And with that renewal of another old mastery, both old Edward's worlds would be visibly complete.

THE END

The millionth chance

Continued from page 11

at anchor in the sky, nose to the mooring tower, an object of pride to all who saw her. With several hundred men holding ropes that trailed her sides, she was "walked" into her shed on November 30 and remained there until the following June.

In the seven weeks from her launching the R 101 had flown on seven flights in excellent weather—all save one had been in daylight—for a total flying time of more than seventy hours.

Sir John Higgins, the Air Member for Supply and Research, described these mild tests in a Minute to Lord Thomson, and was careful to point out that "before she gets a full Certificate of Airworthiness, R 101 has yet to do a forty-eight hour endurance flight. There has hitherto been no suitable opportunity for this as we cannot run the risk of an endurance flight finishing in a gale."

The most pressing problem, though, remained that of giving the R 101 more lift. The total available weight the airship could carry in ideal circumstances was only 35 tons, which meant that a journey to India, for which at least 25 tons of fuel would have to be carried, was right out of the question. Only 10 tons would be available for passengers, crew, baggage and stores.

The giant airship, 732 feet long, 132 feet wide and containing five million cubic feet of gas, hung in her hangar, a paradox of ingenuity. All the brilliance of her design was in danger of being dissipated in supporting her own weight in the sky.

Accordingly, almost as soon as the great doors had been shut behind her, she was steadied by guiding ropes which kept her suspended between earth and roof, and work began on lightening her. Every fitting that could be removed or replaced by something lighter was investigated. Even the glass panes in the windows of the promenade deck were replaced by celluloid sheets.

Then after the R 101 had appeared at the R.A.F. display at Hendon on June 28 to show the public—and her critics—how well she flew, preparations were made for another method of increasing the lifting power. The idea was to cut the airship in half, insert a further section that would increase her length from 732 feet to 777 feet, and sew her up again.

WING COMMANDER Reginald Colmore, the Director of Airship Development, knew that if he were to have a fighting chance of successfully finishing this fearful operation in time to fly to India in the autumn he had to start at once. But this he was not able to do because of some new delay which arose.

Lord Thomson was not too pleased at this, but commented: "So long as R 101 is ready to go to India by the last week in September this further delay in getting her altered may pass. I must insist on the programme for the Indian flight being adhered to, as I have made my plans accordingly."

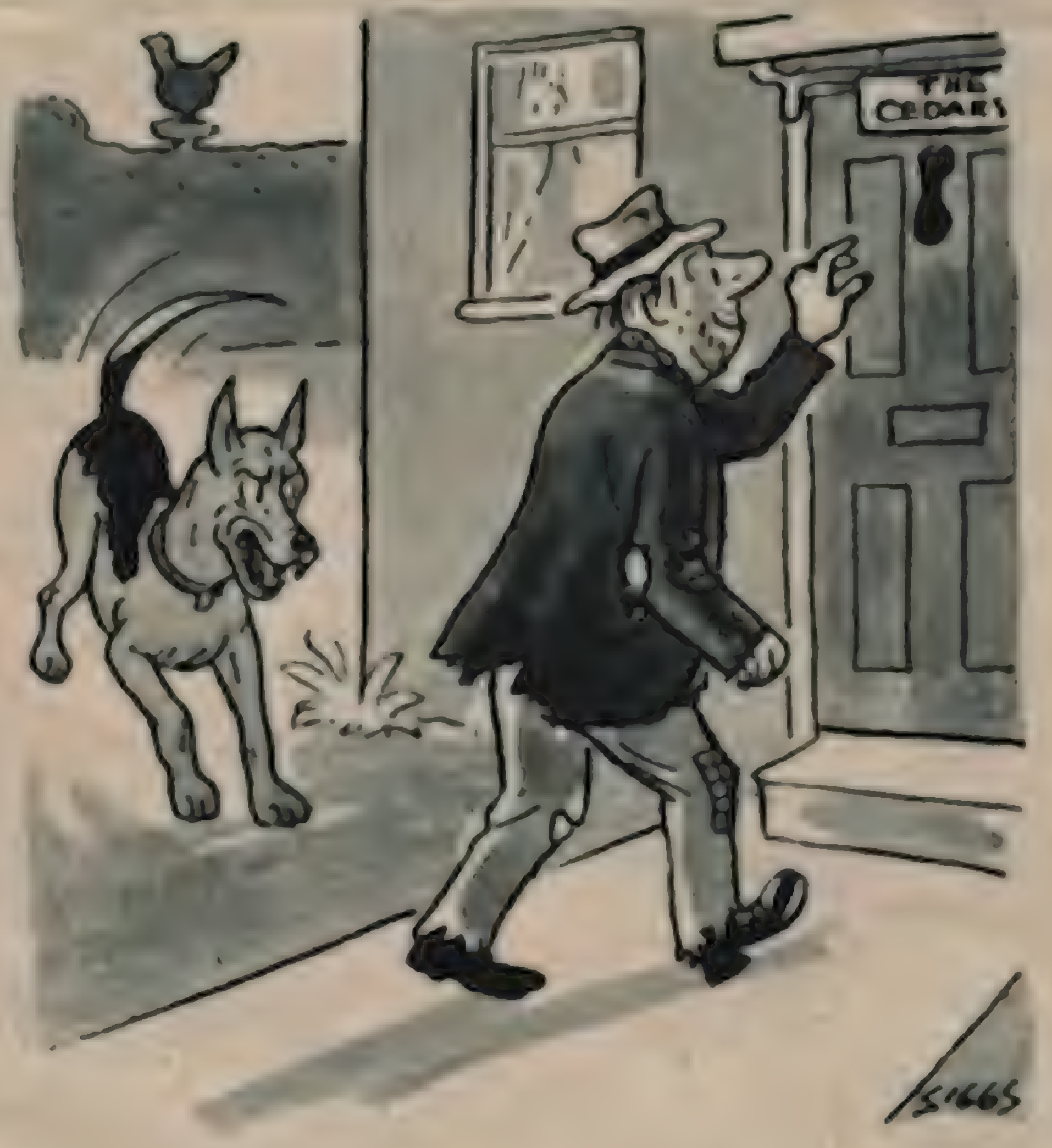
The noble lord, who was anxious to be back in Britain on October 20, in time for an Imperial Conference which was to be held in London, was by now one of the few men concerned with the airship who were not pessimistic.

The task of dividing the hull was made easier by the airship's original construction. She was simply cut in two and so remained, with both halves floating in the air within her shed. Both halves were pushed apart, leaving just enough space between them for the new bay to be inserted.

The bay was constructed on the ground under the gap—a comparatively simple process, since parts had been standardized, and it was rather like fitting a gigantic Meccano model together.

Despite the enormous amount of work involved in modifying the engines, lengthening the hull, stripping off all the fabric envelope and replacing it, the R 101 was ready to be walked out of her shed again by September 25. Unfortunately the weather was so bad that it was decided not to take her out for another five days.

WHY?



JACK was a tramp who went from house to house cadging old clothes. One day he walked up the garden path towards the front door of "The Cedars" on his usual mission. He had just put his hand on the door-knocker when a large Alsatian dog ran out from the back of the house and bit him viciously in the thigh.

Jack fell to the ground, and before anyone could come to his assistance the Alsatian badly injured him.

He subsequently sued the owners of the house for not keeping better control of their dog. "They knew that the animal was likely to attack people," argued Jack's lawyer, "but they did not even take the elementary precaution of putting a 'Beware of the Dog' notice on the front gate of the house."

But Jack lost his case.

WHY? *A barrister explains the judge's ruling on page 31*

During these last desperate weeks of work Wing Commander Colmore had been placed in an unusual and unenviable position—one that was probably unique.

First of all, as Director of Airship Development, he was stimulating the government's airship programme; next, he was working on the actual construction of the airship; and thirdly, he inspected the work being done. Finally, he had the task of advising the Air Minister on her safety and giving an opinion whether or not she was fit to leave.

He was a modest, quiet and stable man, and friends believe that this weight of worry was a heavy load on him, for he knew with what impatience Lord Thomson would view any further delay.

He had every reason to hope that no other holdups would occur, for in the middle of the week before the R 101 was due to leave, with her new bay fitted and her other modifications completed, one last decision had to be made. Should the only remaining available day of that week be spent making an additional flight with a full-power trial of her engines to see how the lengthened hull reacted to the controls, or should that day be spent cleaning and squaring up the ship, ready to receive her passengers?

The latter course was decided on, and so the R 101 went out at dusk on Saturday, October 4, 1930, without ever having undergone a trial at full speed in her final state.

Her officers and crew, some of whom had been on almost constant duty for the previous fortnight, went aboard exhausted.

Throughout that Saturday people had arrived at Cardington airfield to see the airship leave, although she was not due away until 6 p.m. By late afternoon the field was churned into a sticky lake of mud, with the crowd, split into small groups, all conversation exhausted, stamping their feet and turning their backs to the wind that swept in bitterly over the flat countryside. It was very cold.

The roads to the airfield had been blocked for many hours with cars and motor-cycles. There had been special charabancs and coaches of sightseers so that, by about 5.45 p.m., more than three thousand people were waiting huddled in the autumnal rawness. As many more watched from cars parked round the field.

As each new car arrived, bearing passengers, officials or just more sightseers, there was a fresh murmur of interest.

The whole scene seemed unreal and theatrical. To those already in the airship a hundred and eighty feet above them, the upturned faces of the crowd around the base of the mooring mast appeared as white discs stretching away into the darkness.

Ground crewmen ran importantly up and down the two hundred steps in the mast's spiral staircase, their boots clanging on the bare metal stairs. The six passengers, who included Sir Sefton Brancker, the Director of Civil Aviation, and representatives of the Governments of Australia and India, ascended in style in the lift.

MODESTY—3

Modesty died when clothes were born.

Mark Twain

Lord Thomson went by train to Bedford from London, and then drove out to the Cardington airfield in an official car.

"The only thing I fear is the journey to Cardington," he would say when people asked about his views on flying.

Reporters at once surrounded him as he climbed out of his car. With his distinguished appearance, he cut an impressive figure as, parrying their questions, he smiled a politician's smile. In the background his valet, James Buck, busied himself with bags and grips.

"Will you make the entire journey?" one reporter asked Lord Thomson.

"Why not? I am under orders to be back in London by October 20, and I don't intend to have to change my plans."

He made a motion towards the mooring mast, and at once the crowd parted obediently and let him go through.

At the entrance to the lift gates he met Lieutenant-Colonel Richmond and posed for pictures. Of the two men Lord Thomson appeared more at ease. His confident manner was summed up in his declaration that the R 101 was "as safe as a house—except for the millionth chance."

On account of that chance, only the day before, sitting at his desk in the Air Ministry, he had taken a sheet of notepaper and made his will, leaving everything to his brother, Colonel Roger Gordon Thomson.

Lord Thomson was not a rich man; his assets then amounted to £1,737—barely £1,000 more than his valet left in his will. He had, however, investigated the cost of insuring himself for the journey; the insurance companies regarded the risk of airship travel so lightly that they asked a premium of only one per cent. The Air Minister paid £5 and was insured for the sum of £500.

But there was no suggestion of a lack of confidence as he gave a smile here, a half salute to a friend in the crowd there, demonstrating at once his charm and his strength, for he was at home in this atmosphere, with crowds watching him and people to ask deferential questions.

He was delighted at the chance to make this pioneering flight to India by airship. He was already being mentioned as the next Viceroy of India, and what better than to arrive there by air, to show that the mother country, pre-eminent at sea, was also first in the conquest of the air.

THE majority of the forty-eight members of the crew spent what little spare time they had that day with their families.

When Walter Radcliffe, one of the riggers, whose job was to climb inside the metal framework and make adjustments or watch for gas leaks in the gas-bags, reached home that lunchtime to say goodbye, his little son Alan was out playing in the park. Radcliffe went off on his cycle in search of him, for he was determined not to leave until he had seen him. The two were devoted: a special saddle had been fixed up for the boy on the cross-bar of his father's bicycle so that they could go out together for rides. It was on this saddle that he rode back home from the park on that Saturday afternoon.

In the excitement of the departure, Mrs. Radcliffe, who could not go down to the airfield to see the airship go because she also had a daughter of fourteen weeks to look after and nobody to leave her with, did not remember to tell her husband of an odd incident that had occurred in the morning. While his father was in the airship Alan had suddenly burst into tears and run into the kitchen where his mother was cooking breakfast.

"What's the matter?" she asked him.

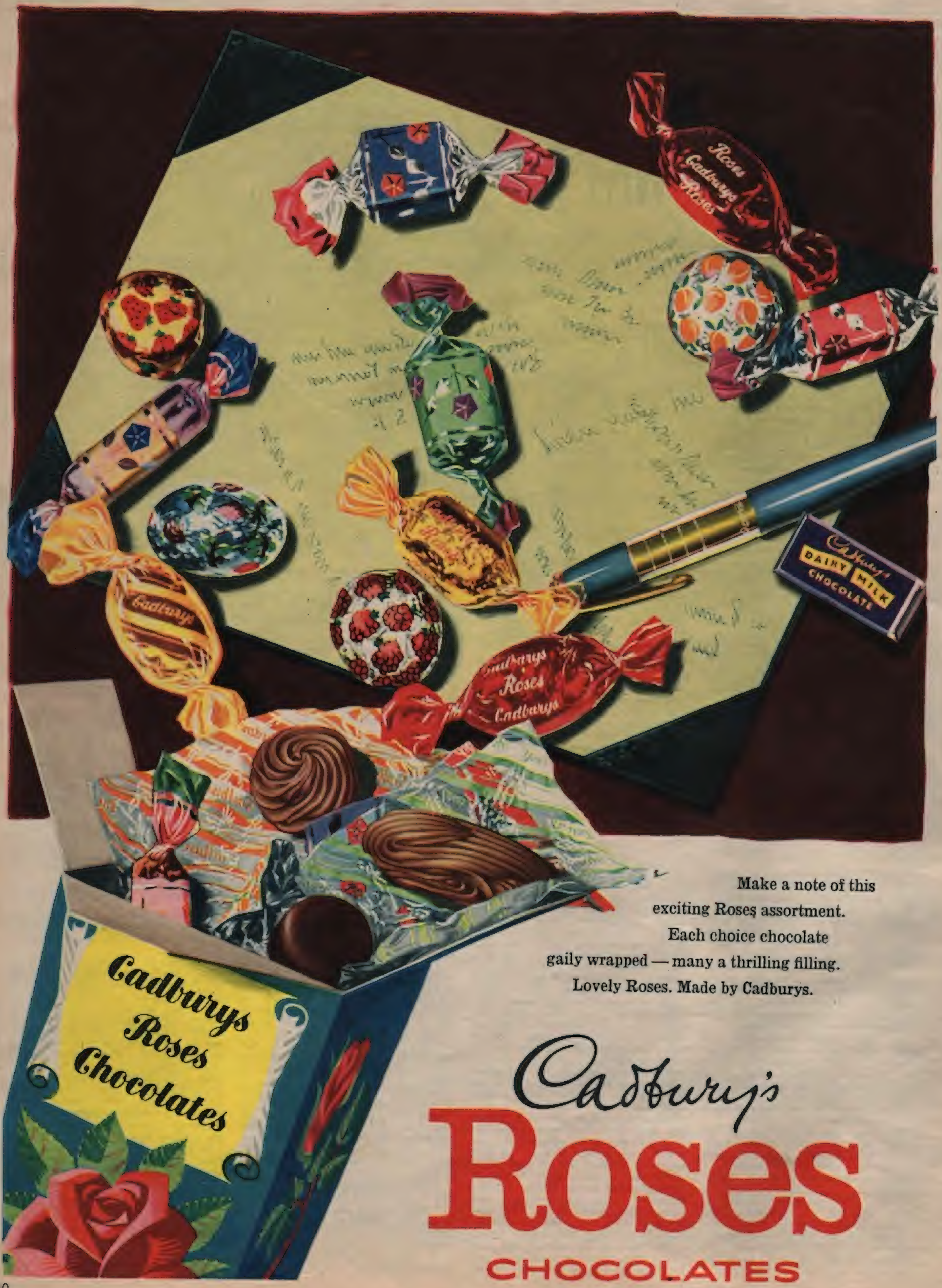
"I haven't got a daddy," he sobbed.

"But of course you have, darling," she said. "Your daddy will soon be back."

Half past six. It was dark now, and much colder. In the distance a church bell struck; the noise carried clearly in the still air.

Four red lights started to flash from the top of the masthead to warn any aircraft unaware of the Air Ministry ban on close flying to keep away. One red light on top of the tower cast a reddish glow over the blunt, smooth nose of the airship, and green and red navigation lights began to glitter on the fins. A soft yellow glow from the windows of the dining-room showed that preparations were already ahead with the evening meal for the passengers.

In the little engine cars hanging from their struts beneath the hull the engineers waited, ready to crank the small starting motors that would turn the big diesel engines. These cars were very cold until the engines began to run, and then the heat and noise became hard to bear. All the engineers were issued with earplugs against the bellow of the exhausts, but they rarely wore them, for the plugs made speech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Roses
CHOCOLATES

impossible and the tinkle of the engine telegraph difficult to hear.

The propellers were at the rear of the engine cars, and from their hubs steel cables ran to points in the hull about fifty feet farther back to help take the strain of pushing the airship along.

Wrapped up against the cold, the engineers peered out of their small windows trying to see what was happening beneath, anxious now to be away and airborne.

The telegraph rang. The engineers, two on duty in each car, as was the procedure while starting, turned on their petrol, and then began to swing the starting handles against compression. The starting engine in the starboard engine-car was the first to go, running slowly, backfiring, sounding like a motor-cycle in the sky. Bells tinkled in the other engine cars, and soon all the diesels were running smoothly, warming up.

In the lower control car which was slung beneath the airship like a single-decker tramcar, the captain, Flight-Lieutenant Carmichael Irwin, stood at the controls, awaiting the moment to cast off.

This car was only about twenty feet long, for the main control room was actually inside the body of the airship, next to the wireless room—an unusual arrangement. In the R 100 there was only one large control car, in which the navigator also worked, and the captain could know where he was in an instant, but in the R 101 he had to run up a ladder to find out.

Irwin was pale, tense and tired. Apart from the continual worry of preparing his giant airship against time, he had been studying for his air force promotion examination.

In addition, Irwin did not feel at all confident about the successful outcome of the journey. As he had mentioned to his wife, there were too many imponderables, too many hasty decisions, too many changes. Their total was one of doubt as he stood in his control car watching the minutes tick away, for to add to them were the late weather reports that spoke of wind and rain to be expected. All wisdom, all experience urged that the flight should be postponed.

Although the lower control car was small it was cold. No heating came on until the generators were running. To Irwin's front the steering coxswain stood, holding the round wooden spokes of a ship's-type wheel. His eyes were not on the scene beneath, which he could have clearly seen through the tall narrow windows with which he was surrounded, but on his compass and altimeter which were facing him. His would be the responsibility for holding the airship to her course.

"Let's see what's on the other rut"

To Irwin's right, by a side window, stood the height coxswain, responsible for the up and down motion of the airship. He had a similar wheel, set sideways along the wall of the car, and connected by wires and pulleys to drums that controlled the elevators.

As Irwin gave the order to increase engine speed, so that he could feel the airship pull against the cone into which her nose nestled at the masthead, a cheer from the crowd came up thinly to those aboard.

"Stand by to slip!" came the order from the control cabin.

Captain F. C. Cook, the mooring mast commander, repeated the order to chargehand-electrician Brewster, who waited to release the airship from her mooring.

A moment of tense silence followed, Cook standing with the phone at his ear.

Then "Slip!" came the command from the control car.

"Slip!" echoed Cook.

Brewster whipped out the pin which secured the release lever and then jerked it down, releasing the airship's retaining safety wire, so that she was free of the cone, the tower and all contact with the earth.

"All engines full speed astern!" said Irwin into his voice-pipe.

Again the telegraphs rang in the engine cars. The engineers pulled open the throttles of the great diesels. As the R 101 pulled out of the cone at the masthead, her bow should have soared up, but instead it dipped slightly. She was so heavily laden with extra fuel oil for the three thousand mile journey to Egypt, and with passengers and their luggage, that she had no resilience left. Also the concave surfaces of the top panels had been gathering moisture all day and this accumulated water added greatly to the gross weight. Even such a small dip was dangerous, for she was at most 180 feet—the height of the mast—above a crowd of thousands, and her total length was 770 feet. A relatively small dip could bring her bows down among the spectators.

Irwin had not a second to lose. He had to bring her nose up again, at once. The only way was to release ballast from her bows—which would leave him without much more to let go should her bows become heavy again in flight. No matter. If he did not release it immediately, there might not be a flight. Irwin gave the order.

Water from the ballast tanks sprayed out into the air in gouts like great tears. The wind from the spinning propellers blew this strange cold rain down on the upturned faces of the watchers.

"She's moving!" someone shouted.

So she was; sluggishly and heavily. Others took up the cry, but most of the people were so cold and damp and wretched that they did no more than wave.

When the R 101 was clear of the masthead, she began to move forward into the darkness, the roar from the engines mounting, the searchlights still holding her as she crept away. Another cheer went up, and many people praised the caution of captain and crew.

They thought that this slowness was an attempt to keep the vessel steady so that the passengers should not be disturbed by the motion in the rising wind. Few of those who saw her circle the airfield had any idea that she was going so slowly because she could not go any faster.

The crowd was now moving away from the mooring mast. Some people even began to sing.

Red and green navigation lights twinkled as the airship turned, and then she slid through the dark sky beyond the hold of the searchlights. For a long time the watchers could see tiny stabs of light from some of the windows; the crew were signalling with torches to their families and friends below.

As she moved, the shape of her hull was lost so that soon only the glow of her lights in the passenger lounges could be seen like the windows of a railway carriage in the sky. She circled Bedford, dipping her nose in a salute of farewell, her lights for a moment illuminating the High Street and the shining river beyond.

Then she lifted her nose, as a ship rises to meet an oncoming wave, and slid towards the south-east. Only the faint dying sound of her engines remained, with the heavy smell of oil in the damp air.

As time went on, the rain, so long awaited, began to fall; lightly at first, and then more heavily. The wind rose violently. It was going to be a rough night.

NEXT WEEK: The six men who stayed alive

Sandy was a soldier's boy

continued from page 15

the gate. Let the sheep wander, serve the shepherd right. But he saw no sheep. There were rough places on the road, holes dug and then filled up. He went round those places, just in case.

The burn was not peaty-clear this morning. It was brown, and higher after rain, and quieter. The hill was quiet too. No birds were calling, and no beasts were moving.

Alexander Donald Kilconquhar McBain pushed his bicycle alone in grey weather on the hill, alone in the blackness of his demon mood.

The heads of the high hills were in the clouds. The ceiling of the clouds came lower. There was a drizzle from the east that clouded handlebars, beaded saddle, jersey, Black Watch kilt.

Sandy let his bike fall anyhow beside the road, and he walked through heather, and his legs were wet, and he came to the place that he remembered from the first time. It was a place beside the burn where there were pebbles of a perfect shape and size. His fingers picked the round white pebbles and put them in his sporran pocket, but Sandy thought about his grudges. The more he thought, the more huge and real his grudges grew, and he was liking hating.

You're a disgrace to your dad, Sergeant Urquhart said. I fought Davie Muir about my dad, about saying: *The Bullfrog in the fancy suit, puffin' and croakin' fit to bust.* Well, Davie Muir was right; that's what my dad looks like.

Silly little boy. How dare you make us insult your father. You let the regiment down.

And Sandy knew, in the worst badness of his rage, that the colonel was the reason for it. He would have managed not to mind too much too long about what anybody else had said, but the colonel had been grand to him, and he had thought the colonel was just grand, and the colonel always understood and trusted him, and then the colonel was worse than all the others put together. *You let the regiment down.*

"I hate the regiment," Sandy shouted. "I'll go to prison and steal and lie and everything. I'll never be a Black Watch piper, never."

He had a good few stones, but not enough to smash the greenhouse with. Something was moving. It was a hare. The hare is blue to match the summer hills, white to match the winter hills.

Sandy fired the catapult. He hit the hare right smack in the middle of the head, a perfect shot, and out of practice, too.

The hare dropped on to its short front legs, and then it was turning round its tail, staggering circles round and round. The hare was screaming.

Then Sandy stood up to cross the burn and do what he had to do, which was kill the hare to stop its misery. But the hare stopped screaming, and it ran away.

Sandy was a wilful, fiery-tempered boy. But he was a kind boy. He felt a bit horrible for a minute, and then he thought: *hare's okay*. It ran hoppity-hop away like lightning.

There was another pebble place a little farther up. He walked again. He did not want to hurt things. He wanted to get his own back on people.

He found more pebbles of the right shape and size, and put them in his sporran pocket. He had enough. He would go back now and do everything the same for vengeance in the same murky weather. Well, there was a difference. He had not had his bike the first time. He would go down through the gate, and leave his bike, and go through the low arch in the wall, and along by the spruce trees and the beeches, and through the rhododendrons to the greenhouse.

Sandy took a last look about. He saw something move. It was not a hare this time. It was not any of the wild things of the hill. Sandy rubbed his eyes. He looked again. It was a man. It was a man on the hill, where no man ought to be.

Then he saw another man. They both wore clothes of green and grey and brown, a touch of purple—the colours of the hill today. They were like quick shadows in the murky weather. They carried stubby things, like tommy guns. And now they knelt together at a rock, and one was searching with a pair of glasses—to the north-west, which was the Secret Place direction, and to the west, to here, yes, really *here*.

Sandy dropped and lay flat. His heart was racing pump—pump—pump. His face was in wet black earth and heather roots. The men were soldiers. *Our soldiers?* But this was not a training place. The hill was out of bounds.

Had they seen him? Nothing happened, and he did not dare to look. Then he dared, and raised his head an inch. The man with the binoculars was looking south. Then both men stood. They waved. *Hallo, Sandy over there*, they might be waving. Or did they wave the other way? And then he heard the thump-thump-thump of running feet; and then he saw more men against the skyline.

Sandy knew suddenly for certain somehow that Peace was the false alarm, and this was the true alarm of Giant War. *Make bonfires, dance and sing.* The Prime Minister was pretty wrong on Thursday evening, and this was Saturday, and those soldiers coming into sight—they were the Enemies of the Queen.

How many? Sandy could not tell. More and more showed sharp against

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WHY?

See page 29

BECAUSE the judge held that as far as the owners of the house were concerned, Jack was a trespasser and had no right to be in the front garden anyway. A trespasser must take premises as he finds them. If the same accident had happened to a tradesman or a guest the situation would have been different.

(*This ruling is based on actual cases*)

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the sky, and came on down the hill, wearing the colours of the hill. They were not headed straight for Sandy. They ran in ones and twos and threes, some alone, some sharing loads, to pass to the north of him, between him and the steep hill-face.

They had no vehicles. All the groups of men were still, and one man moved. He climbed on to a rock and stood and spoke—harsh, the words sounded, hard short soldier's order-words, and they were foreign.

Sandy turned his head to listen to the south. No sounds at all. Where was the battalion? Still in Altnadean? Coming? Gone somewhere else? Surely there must have been a warning?

Sandy had these sort of thoughts or questions in his mind. He had been afraid of Giant War. But now that Giant War had really come, Sandy was not afraid.

He looked between a slit of rock. The man who had been speaking pointed. He pointed at the Secret Place, which still just showed, far away below the clouds, and then the clouds came down, or the mist swirled in, and the square blank buildings of the Secret Place were blotted out. The enemy soldiers marched towards the Secret Place, and then the mist was there and here and everywhere.

Sandy McBain crawled back. Every inch of him was wet, even his Black Watch kilt soaked through. He looked again. The mist was thick. He saw no Enemies. All that mattered was to run beside the burn and reach his bicycle and take the warning down.

Conscience Struck

by RICHARD ARMOUR

My conscience pricks me, sticks me, stabs me,
My conscience jolts me, jars me, jabs me.
My conscience digs me, gigs me, gores me,
My conscience scars me, scares me, scores me.
My conscience bangs me, whangs me, bops me . . .
My conscience warns, but seldom stops me.

Sandy ran beside the burn. He did not hear the firing of the shots. He heard a thudding rattle to his left, and then WHEE-OOM of a bullet flying on.

Hail, Kinyucher, he heard the colonel's voice say near and kindly, suddenly to him. He ran with trembling legs, and stumbled, and ran on.

And then the air was loud with snaps, with deafening cracks, and he knew that the bullets were for him, and he saw a grey splatter on a rock, and he jigged away from the snapping cracks, away from the burn, and then a big hot hammer struck his left arm just below the elbow, and he was running down a slope. The snaps and cracks went on, but higher overhead, and then they stopped.

Sandy stumbled, running. His left arm flipped and flopped about. He heard men's voices and he fell into the peat-hag. Sandy crouched there, and he thought: *I never heard the guns or rifles shoot. Only the bullets snapped and cracked.* The snap-and-crack-of-bullets sound was new to Sandy.

Men now, boots scuffing in the heather, squelching in the bog. Sandy had been afraid before, but never terrified. Voices, muffled in the murky weather, louder now, not muffled.

The voices came and went and came again, and then they went away and stayed away, and Sandy sighed. The blood was through his jersey sleeve, and trickling down, and dripping from his fingers in the dripping peat-hole.

His arm was hot, but he did not feel it sore at all. He pulled up the sleeve and saw the hole and a bit of bloody bone, and he took his handkerchief in his right hand, and one end in his teeth, and tried to tie it tight above the elbow with his good hand and his teeth. He managed it. They learned about tourniquets last year at school. And then he had to climb one-handed out of the peat-hag, which was deeper than himself.

He found a foothold, a higher one, and then he managed it. Sandy rolled from the edge of the peat-hole. He lay gasping. Sandy was a highland boy. He knew about people's skeletons in peat-holes, but a peat-hole was what had saved him up to now.

He was able to listen in a while. Men running far away? He did not know. He could not hear and he could not see, for the clouds were down, the mist was here and there and everywhere. He had to find the burn. If he found the burn, and followed the burn to the pebble place, and went square from the burn. . . . But those men, the terrible Enemies of the Queen who had seen him moving through the mist. . . .

THEY would do it again now, wouldn't they? Sandy went left, expecting to hear the *snaps*, the deafening *cracks*; or something new. But the hill was quiet in the mist. . . .

Sandy found the burn and followed it downstream. He ran a bit, and tripped, and walked again. His arm began to hurt. He was tired. He felt fuzzy, light and empty in the head. What had happened? What was happening? What was it that he had to do? Find his bike, was what he had to do.

Was that a man? No, it was a rock.

The first pebble place. Now leave the burn. Now walk square away, and to the west.

He found the road. *Clever me,* thought Sandy, light and empty in his head. But then he remembered what he was trying to do, and that was take the news to Altnadean. He ran down the road, his left arm dangling, flipping, flopping. He did not find his bicycle. It could not be as far as this. *Run on down,* he wanted to. *Run all the way.* But he stopped himself, and turned, and ran uphill again, and the Enemies were somewhere up the road.

He found his bicycle. He picked it up one-handed. He got his leg across the saddle. His saddle was low, because he was growing fast. The front brake was the right-hand lever on the handlebars. It was difficult downhill. The front wheel shuddered.

Sandy rode in the mist on the stony road. He wobbled. What was it he had been going to do before all this? Be more and more alone, liking hating, finding perfect stones, and then down to shoot the end out of the greenhouse. Why? What was the tiny thing about him not doing something that people and the colonel said he did last night? Couldn't remember now.

The gate was open. Sandy freewheeled through, just missed the post, and on. He was below the clouds. He saw the valley of Altnadean, green of grass and trees, dull brown of harvest in the murky weather, no Enemies.

He wobbled worse and worse. The front wheel shuddered worse and worse. His arm was hurting worse and worse. His arm was all there was of him, and then the front wheel skidded, and he fell, and felt the rough road scrape him—right knee, hand and shoulder.

Sandy lay. He couldn't. No, he couldn't. *Hail, Kinyucher,* he heard the colonel's voice say, near and kindly, suddenly to him. He could. He did. He rode again. He reached the main road, turned right along the tarmac into Altnadean.

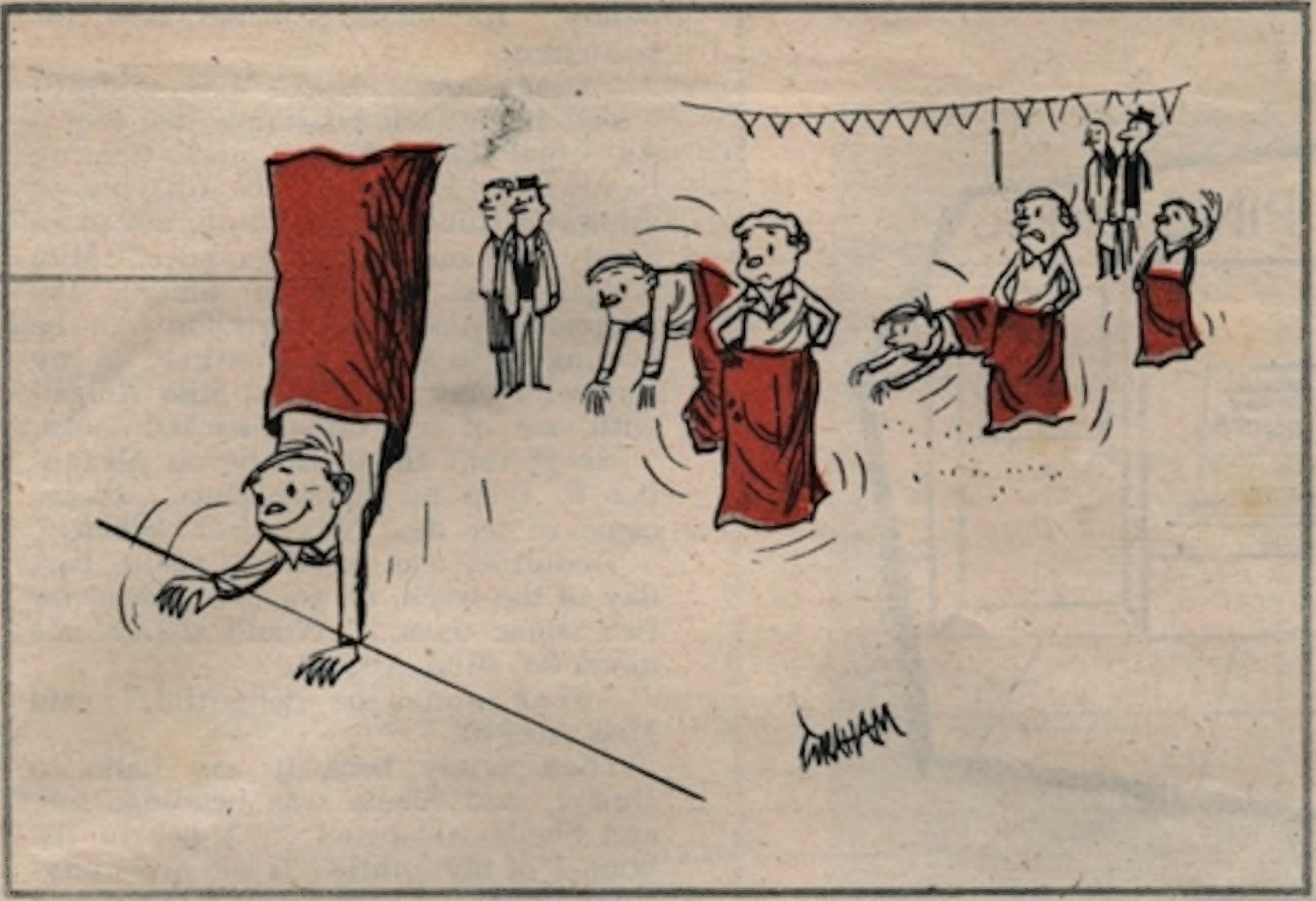
Altnadean P.O. and sweetie shop. Sandy rode on through the village.

Were these the Enemy below the trees, these roley-poley carriers, huge round rubber sausages for wheels?

Not the Enemy. Not moving. Sandy saw a face he knew, a square-jawed face, the carrier officer, Mr. Irwin. He stood at the first carrier underneath the trees.

Sandy stopped. He toppled. The bicycle fell on him. "Colonel!" he gasped to Mr. Irwin. "Enemies on the hill!"

Mr. Irwin pulled off the bike. Then he took Sandy by knees and waist and



popped him up to the carrier driver. He asked no questions. Mr. Irwin was not a question-asking man. Mr. Irwin got in, too. They turned back out of line.

Mr. Irwin put his own field dressing on Sandy's arm. "Tell the colonel what happened where," he said. "Tell him quickly. Think now, Sandy." The elastic of the catapult was dangling from Sandy's sporran pocket, so Mr. Irwin took out the catapult and used the handle to tighten the tourniquet on Sandy's arm.

Sandy tried to think, but pain was throbbing, roaring in his arm; and then they reached a chestnut tree in front of the old Hydropathic. The colonel stood below the chestnut tree. It was the same chestnut tree where Sandy had left his bicycle and a chocolate-sandwich cake.

The colonel came to the carrier. Mr. Irwin spoke to him. "Hail, Kinyucher," said the colonel. His voice was kindly, and his face was kindly in spite of beak and frosty eyes and big moustaches. "Hit anywhere else?" asked the colonel, looking at Sandy's arm.

"No, sir," Sandy said. And then he told what happened where. The colonel smiled at him, and that made Sandy tell the colonel quick as lightning, and then the colonel rapped some questions: *How many men?* About a hundred, Sandy thought. *Sure no vehicles?* Not one, that Sandy saw. *H'mm,* said the colonel. *Sure the man pointed in that direction?* Yes sir, straight at the Secret Place, and the men marched off that way, and then the mist came down.

"Same message just come in again, sir," said the adjutant. "Await further orders from Command."

"I've waited long enough for orders," said the colonel. "You can tell Command to jump into the River Dean."

"Right, sir," said the adjutant. He grinned. So did Smodger, the pipe major, even the R.S.M., the short quick grins of men who trust a man in war.

"We'll catch them," said the colonel. He spoke fast. Sandy was too tired to hear. His arm was aching worse, and lights were flashing in his eyes, and Mr. Irwin lifted Sandy from the carrier, and then he was looking up at the colonel and Smodger in the carrier.

"Did Sheila find you with my message?" asked the colonel.

"Ay," said Sandy. He forgot to say "sir" because Sheila had caught him, but he had not let her give him the colonel's message.

"Good boy, Sandy," the colonel said.

"Good boy, skipper," good old Smodger said.

"Let's get cracking, Angus," said the colonel. The carrier rolled away, so quick and so quiet, squishing along on squeegee rubber.

"So you took the catapult," Dad said, looking at Sandy's arm.

"Yes, Dad," Sandy said. "Sorry, Dad," he said.

"Man," said the broad pipe major, carrying his pipes. "I wish your grandad could have been here the day."

The R.S.M. glared down at Sandy, and Sandy was pretty well frightened of the R.S.M., so he stared at the R.S.M. like some deer has to stare at some terrible tiger, and the world was going round and round, and Sandy thought he saw a grim wee smile show underneath the R.S.M.'s moustaches.

"You and you!" barked the R.S.M. to stretcher-bearers, bandsmen. "Take this soldier to the R.A.P."

The adjutant, the R.S.M. and the pipe major got into the colonel's scout car to chase the colonel to the war. Sandy was taken to the Regimental Aid Post, and then they drove him to the cottage hospital, and Doctor Swanson gave him stuff to take the pain away; but all day long the battle raged, and Sandy was thinking of his dad. . . .

The battalion stood at ease. The Queen was speaking. Sandy listened to the Queen, Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment, mother of the young Queen of the Toast. He listened to the words she spoke, and they were simple words a boy could understand. The Queen spoke of a treacherous attack. If it had succeeded, there might have been a great world war. But the attack had failed, and the Black Watch had won glory in that fierce encounter, and no great war had come. Now even the small short war was over.

A partridge called from a stubble field beside the River Dean. "Chetiriya," the partridge called, crisply from the crisp stubble on a day of peace. Sandy thought of the men on the hill. Landed from submarines, or so they said.

And now the Queen spoke of those who fell. . . .

Among the men who fell for peace was Number 2765318 Private Smith, W.; called Smodger, as are all the Black Watch Smiths.

Sandy was thinking of good old Smodger. He had thought of him often this last month; not all the time, of course, for life is a boy's companion. But Smodger was with Sandy in his mind, and he could not quite think of Smodger dead, and nor could Sheila—Good Old Smodger, the un-grown-up, their pal. Miss Abigail mourned Smodger, too. Another good enemy gone, she said.

Sandy's left arm tickled in the sling. The men were still as statues, and the regimental sergeant-major stood nearby, and Sandy did not dare to move. But then he thought: *I'm not a Soldier Jock.* So he gave his left arm one good rub to quieten the healing tickle, and he listened to the Queen.

And now the Queen was speaking of the regiment, about it being a special kind of family; first and always a Scottish family, but with members, too, from England, Ireland, Wales. . . .

The Queen means like the likes of

MODESTY—4

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German Proverb

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Good Old Smodger, Sandy was thinking.

From Canada and all the world, the Queen was saying. And everywhere, here and across the seas, there were private families within the Black Watch family. . . .

The Queen's own family was such a one, for the Queen was a child of the Black Watch country.

Those names were many, the Queen was saying now. They were the names of all who served, and she would mention one today. The first Piper McBain fell at the Battle of Waterloo, a hundred and fifty years ago. One month ago, Pipe Major Donald McBain played his battalion into action, and was severely wounded. . . .

Sandy felt small among the people, as he heard the Queen speak of his father. She spoke of the other wounded, too. . . .

And now the Queen was smiling, and now she said: "A second McBain was wounded on that day—a member of a Black Watch family, too young to be a member of *The* Black Watch family. But I think we agree that Sandy McBain is truly a member of our Family."

There came a sound from the men of the Black Watch on parade. . . .

SANDY was alone. He was not alone down here with the battalion—the old Hydropathic, towers and turrets, battlements and domes behind him.

He was alone on the hill in murky weather; and why was he on the hill alone? He was getting ready to bust Miss Abigail's greenhouse a second time, for spite. And then he was running. And in the peat-hole in a panic. . . .

Folk had been saying nice things to him lately, like he was some kind of hero. But Sandy was not happy in his mind. *Och!* he would say, and that was all he could say to anyone until he managed to speak to Sheila. *Don't be daft,* said Sheila. *It was good luck you were there. You brought the warning, didn't you?—Yes,* he said. *But. . . . And you rode the bike one-handed with a wounded broken arm right down the hill. Sandy, you're just blethering.* But Sandy was not happy in his mind.

Sandy was alone, not listening to the words the Queen was saying. But then the Queen stopped speaking, and he was back again.

The medals were presented. The last to be presented was for Pipe Major Donald McBain—the Distinguished Conduct Medal—and Sandy was to take it. That was why he was on parade at all. Mum not being able because of the baby. Sandy had not been keen on the idea, but the R.S.M. just glared at him. . . .

"You now, laddie," said the R.S.M., and Sandy went forward all alone across the square to hear but not to hear a story he knew well already and thought about each night in bed; how the mist was thick, and Dad led the battalion, twice wounded, playing against the enemy in the mist.

The Queen pinned the medal on Sandy's good tweed jacket, just above the sling. And she smiled at Sandy, and shook hands with him and spoke to him a while.

After that Sandy walked back to where he came from in a bit of a muddle about everything. But the R.S.M. said: "That's you finished, Sandy. Away over and get yourself a good place for the March Past."

The R.S.M. pointed with his sergeant-major's stick where Sandy was to go, among the crowds of people close to the Queen at the saluting base.

So that meant Sandy had to go the whole way back, and he wished that the earth or a mist would swallow him up, but he started across the open square alone again. He would have to pass the colonel on his way, for the colonel was alone now, too, standing before his whole battalion.

Sandy stared down at the gravel, and then at all the jumbled faces in the crowd, and then at the deep-blue hills beyond the Dean, and then at the colonel's back view, not quite so huge as George MacTaggart, but middling huge. The colonel looked terrific in his Number One Dress, green doublet, crossbelt, dirk and all. The colonel was staring straight ahead as Sandy passed him. "Hail Kinyucher," the colonel rumbled, private message, deep as thunder.

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Sandy felt a bit cheered up by that, but he still had fifty yards to go before he could reach the people, all those faces staring at him, rows and rows of grinning faces, red and pink and pale and brown, one great grin of all the faces—worst feeling ever, cheers and clapping, too. At last he reached the people, head dipped to go below the cord to push his way to lose himself among the people.

"Easy does it," said Mr. Mackenzie in his bowler hat, as he was always saying in the garden in his bowler hat about the way to be a gardener. "More haste, less speed," said Mr. Mackenzie, turning Sandy round. So Sandy stood in the very front rank of the crowd, with all the faces behind him and beside him, soon forgotten.

The colonel's voice gave orders. The colonel had some voice to sound against the old Hydropathic and across the glen and echo back. "Quick march." Then the battalion marched in threes to a greater sound than any colonel's voice could be. The pipes and drums played "Highland Laddie."

Now they were coming from the left—drum major with his silver stick, pipers in the Royal Stewart, drummers in the Black Watch kilt, wild song of pipes and discipline of drums, and Drummer Strachan in his tiger-skin.

One place was empty in the pipes and drums, the place in the front rank, right. Sandy watched that place, held empty for his father. And just for a moment now, as the drum major passed saluting, as the pipe band passed to the music of the wild mad tune, the tune that his father had been playing on the hill—just for a moment Sandy saw his father in that place, waxed moustaches, red of face, grand swelling of cheeks and neck, the broad pipe major. Sandy's dad was not really there. Sandy's dad was in a hospital, and doing fine, the doctors said.

The pipes and drums wheeled left, and left, and left again. And now they halted, playing "Highland Laddie." They faced the Queen at the saluting base to play the battalion past the Queen.

First came the Colour Party and the Colours, the Queen's Colour and the Regimental Colour, Colours of the Forty-Second, First Battalion of the Royal Highland Regiment, senior of the six great Highland Regiments.

Then the colonel came. He swept his sword across above the glitter of his medals, and back again, red silk tassel dangling at the hilt. The blade flashed down, and it caught the sun of an Indian summer's afternoon. The colonel saluted his colonel-in-chief.

Sandy saw the colonel, and he saw another man, a different, small unsplendid-looking man, nothing much to look at except for the secret muscle-man and muscle-lady. *Twenty years,* the colonel said. *And he still gets the better of me every time.*

There was more than met the eye in good old Private Smodger Smith.

Alexander Donald Kilconquhar McBain stood all alone among all the people while six hundred men marched past the Queen.

"Fall out the officers." The parade was over. The Queen went to meet the officers.

Mr. Mackenzie had to pass the time of day. Then Sandy was just escaping to lose himself among the people, but he heard Sheila calling him.

It was Miss Abigail and Sheila and the brown dog, Buster. He was a good-sized puppy now, and he had a new leather collar, and Sheila held him on a brand-new leather leash.

"Good afternoon, Alexander," said Miss Abigail.

"Good afternoon, Miss Abigail," said Sandy. He made a small bow for politeness.

"Dear boy," said Miss Abigail. "You have such charming manners." As usual Miss Abigail was treating Sandy like Bonny Prince Charlie, or anyway a duke, or something, not plain Sandy. "I miss you, Alexander," Miss Abigail said loudly in among the people. "Also, the battalion will be leaving us so soon—not entirely to my sorrow, I may say," said Miss Abigail with one of her rather wicked looks, "except that there will be no Alexander to keep me in my place. Please come to see me, Alexander. When?"

Tomorrow was Saturday again, best day of the week, no going to school for two whole days. "Would the morn's morn do, Miss Abigail."

"That would be delightful," said Miss Abigail.

Then Sandy bent to say hallo to Buster, and Sheila was bending, too, and Sheila whispered: "A bee in the bonnet of my auntie's is she loves anything in panties," and Miss Abigail said something about infant humour, always so mysterious; but she did not ask what they were laughing at.

"What did the Queen say, Sandy?" Sheila asked.

What did the Queen say, Sandy? But that reminded him of what was troubling him, because of him not deserving it. And then even the Queen said everyone was proud of him. Sandy shook his head. He just stared down at Buster.

"The humble warrior," said Miss Abigail.

The Queen and the colonel were coming back. The Queen knew Miss Abigail, of course. She was going to have tea with Miss Abigail this afternoon, and they stood talking now, and then Miss Abigail presented people, friends and enemies, to the Queen. It was certainly no place for Sandy, so he started to escape. . . .

"Hold your horses," said the colonel. So Sandy had to hold his horses, no escape.

He said hallo, and then he looked at Buster again, the chocolate dog, with the quick wise sober eye about him. Buster sat, and he was watching Sandy.

"Oh, Sandy," said the colonel.

"Yessir?" Sandy said. He looked up at the colonel.

"That's your dog," the colonel said.

"*My* dog?" Sandy said. He forgot to say sir, of course.

"Smith's idea. Smith said you were to have him."

Sandy looked at Buster, at his lollopy front legs, double size like all good puppies' legs, at his curly chocolate coat, at his tail wagging at the tip, at the quick, wise, sober eye of Buster.

"Man, he's braw!" said Sandy in a huge, loud voice.

And then Sandy remembered his manners, and he looked up to say *Och, thanks!* to the colonel for the grandest surprise and the grandest present that any boy had ever had. But the Queen was walking here.

"Goodbye, Sandy," the Queen said.

"Goodbye, Your Majesty," he said. Sandy shook hands with the Queen, and then he put his good right hand across his front, and Sandy made his best bow to the Queen.

Sheila gave Buster's leash to Sandy, who forgot to thank the colonel. Then the Queen and all the high-ups got into cars and drove away for tea with Miss Abigail, with the colonel and Sheila.

Sandy was alone again among the people. He was afraid that people might be saying awkward things, and he wished that he could take off Dad's Distinguished Conduct Medal and put it in his sporran pocket so as not to be noticed among the people; but he thought it might not be just right to take off Dad's grand medal here. . . .

There was a tug against his good right hand. Sandy looked down. Buster was doing a caper for the fun of being with Sandy, so Sandy was not alone at all.

"Come away, then, Buster," Sandy said. The puppy and the soldier's boy went home together.

THE END

"Sandy Was A Soldier's Boy," by David Walker, is published as a book by Collins at 10s. 6d.

MODESTY—5

Modesty is the only sure bait when you angle for praise.

Lord Chesterfield

Follow them to ROME!

FUN with words in Bullets won £500 plus Rome Weekend for two for Mr. K. Goodwin (Altrincham). You see him here, sightseeing in the Forum with his friend. Their sightseeing also included St. Peter's, the Colosseum, Catacombs, a "Rome by Night" tour . . . and they threw coins in the Trevi fountain. With your Bullets coupon below you can win £650 plus £125 weekend celebration in Rome!

WIN £750 BULLETS CASH—OR £125 WEEKEND in ROME for TWO plus £650

If your First Prize Bullet this week is adjudged best of Contests 2,101, 2,102, 2,103 and 2,104, its £300 award is increased to £650 plus Weekend in Rome, or £750 cash.

OTHER PRIZES: £25, £10, £9, £8, £7, £6, 3 of £5, 10 of £2 10s., 100 "Double Sixers," 1,500 2-in-1 Awards with £1,000 Surprise and SUMMER FEASTS—see below

WAY TO WIN

Here's how to shape a Bullet. First, grasp the broad idea by enjoying the latest winners. Then choose as your starting-point any Example from list below. To it, add TWO, THREE or FOUR words to make the whole into a bright Bullet.

Shock For John
Industry's Car
Tomorrow's Weather
Headmaster Hailsham
The Daily Treadmill
Dozing In A Deck-chair
To Help The Teenagers
That Piano
Cruelty To A Child
Carping, Cribbing, Criticizing
Undismayed
Turn Off The Telly And
This New Flu
Sonny's Pocket-money
Dangerous Driver
Her Lily-white Hands
With A Shudder
The Beauty Queen
All Over
Donkey On The Sands

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as above.

..................'s Finest Hour
A Pocketful Of..................
Few..................................
Smoking............................
It Might Be A..............., So
When The......Comes Home

EXAMPLE
....
BULLET
EX.
....
B.
EX.
....
B
EX.
....
B.
EX.
....
B.

CHICKEN, CHAMPAGNE, PEACHES and CREAM Grand Summer Feast as Bonus to each of the 20 chief winners whose successful Bullet was one of five or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

2,103 Closing Postmark MONDAY, AUG. 19

I agree to rules and enclose P.O. entry-fee at the rate of 6d. per Bullet.

Signed...
Address...
P.O. Value.....
No....... ....

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Stick TWO 2½d. stamps on this coupon (which you can enclose with your entry) for the 8-page "Skyscraper" Bulletin dated Aug. 24, containing SIX £1,000 Opportunities.

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☛ WIN a MONTH of SURPRISES NEXT WEEK!

CASH PLUS HOLIDAY WON!

"BULLETS" No. 2,098—FIRST PRIZE, £500 — or £75 Swiss Holiday plus £450: T. Jerdin, 110 Somerford Road, Reddish, Stockport:

Presumably Fattening Landlords *Reduces* Inflation!

£25: F. A. H. Gurd, 7 Avon Close, Lymington, Hants: THE PALACE COMBED—FOR THAT BOY'S *Comb?* £10: W. C. Bullock, 29 Highbury Gardens, Ilford, Essex: GOOD ENOUGH FOR KRUSCHEV—*Some* OF STALIN'S METHODS!

OTHER AWARDS: £9: W. O'Donohoe, 13 Girton Close, Greenford, Middlesex: THAT SMOKING HABIT — DESPITE "FINDINGS,"—I'M KEEPING! £8: Mrs. E. Woodyatt, 28 Kilmorie Road, Birmingham: GOOD ENOUGH FOR OLD — AGA KHAN—*Youth's* WISDOM. £7: P. Cassidy, 31 Clyde Drive, Shotts, Lanarkshire: WRECKAGE BY THE ROADSIDE—MARRIAGE—*Both* WANTED "WHEEL." £6: Mrs. R. Jepson, 18 Maple Avenue, Audenshaw, Manchester: LIKE CHAMPAGNE—GILES'S KISS? CORK POPPING! £5: Mrs. F. Graham, 33 Stanley Street, New Seaham: THE SPLASH VIVIEN MADE—IN "ROLE" OF RESCUER! £5: W. Jacobs, 5 Bispham Drive, Meols, Wirral: NOT MUCH ESCAPES—THE VILLAGE BOBBY'S *Feet*! £5: R. G. Jones, 41 Orme Road, Bangor, Caerns: NOT MUCH SPACE—AVAILABLE FOR *Ordinary* CRISES!

For ten winners of £2 10s., see *Bullets Bulletin*. 100 "Double Six" Prizes and 1,500 2-in-1 Awards have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best Bullet received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. at the rate of 6d. per Bullet. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated Sept. 14), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, August 31, for early news of No. 2,103 result.)

POST ENTRY

Bullets 2,103, "John Bull,"
Long Acre, London, W.C.99

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NEXT WEEK

ILLUSTRATED, out Wednesday, August 14, commences to publish—in full-colour—selections from the COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS already submitted. An opportunity for you to see how the other entrants are doing! Order next week's issue today!

ILLUSTRATED

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Enjoy an excellent meal

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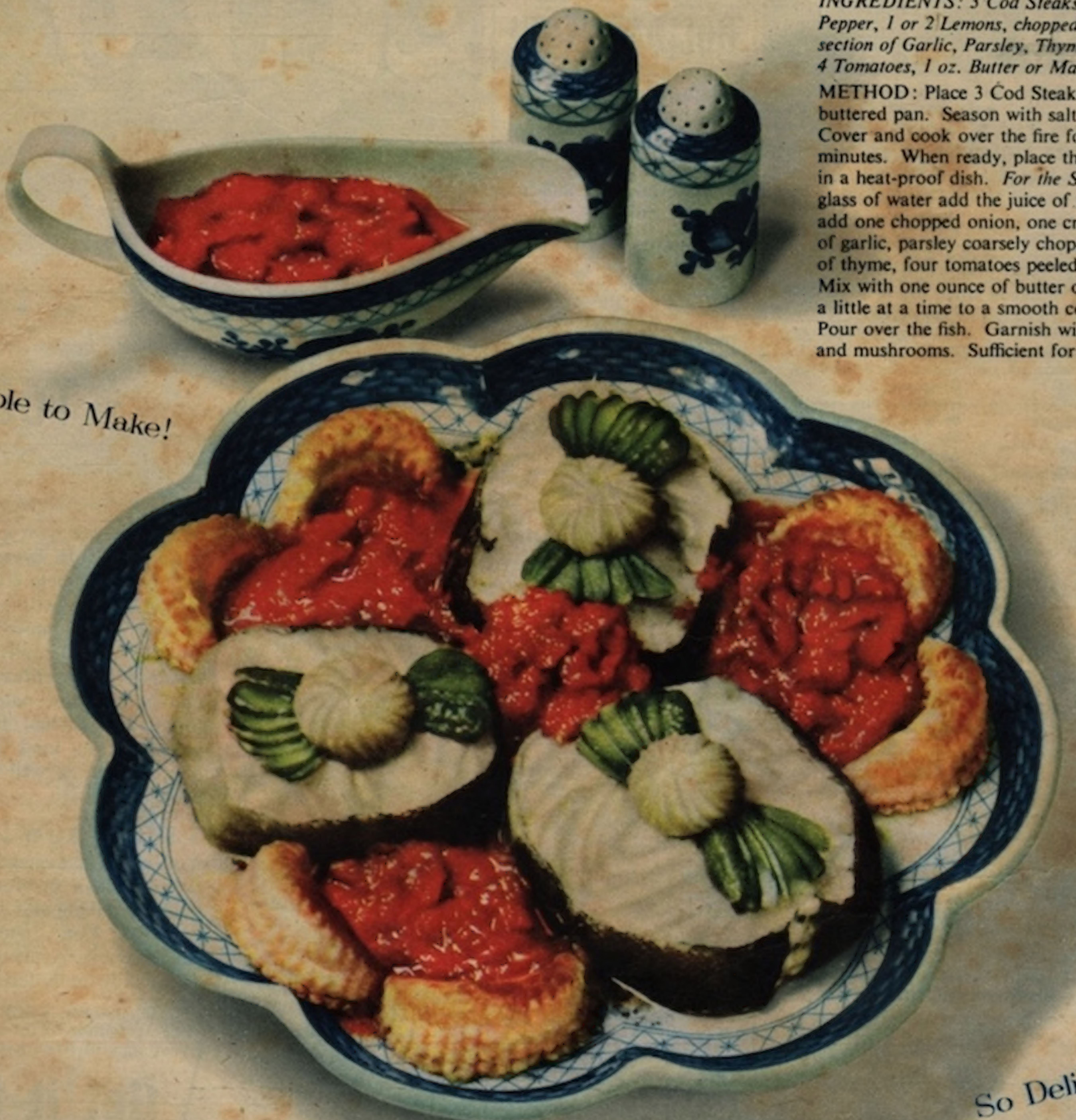
Cod Steaks

(PORTUGUESE STYLE)

Francois Girotti—a pupil of the internationally renowned Escoffier—is one of today's leading chefs, with 49 years' service in some of Europe's most famous kitchens.

INGREDIENTS: 3 Cod Steaks, Salt and Pepper, 1 or 2 Lemons, chopped Onions, section of Garlic, Parsley, Thyme, 4 Tomatoes, 1 oz. Butter or Margarine.

METHOD: Place 3 Cod Steaks in a well buttered pan. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook over the fire for about 15 minutes. When ready, place the Cod Steaks in a heat-proof dish. *For the Sauce:* To one glass of water add the juice of 1 or 2 lemons, add one chopped onion, one crushed section of garlic, parsley coarsely chopped, a pinch of thyme, four tomatoes peeled and chopped. Mix with one ounce of butter or margarine, a little at a time to a smooth consistency. Pour over the fish. Garnish with gherkins and mushrooms. Sufficient for three persons.



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